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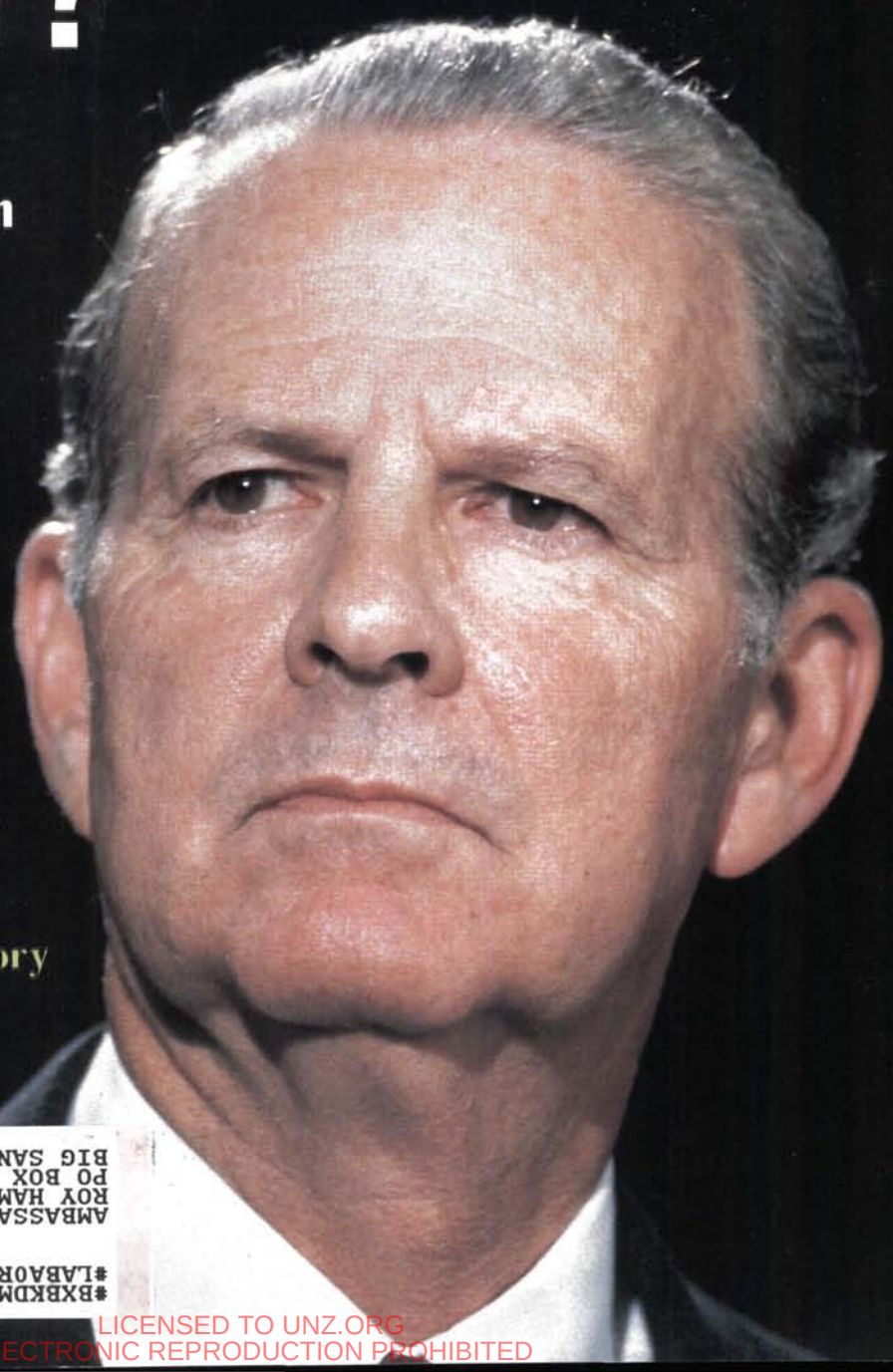

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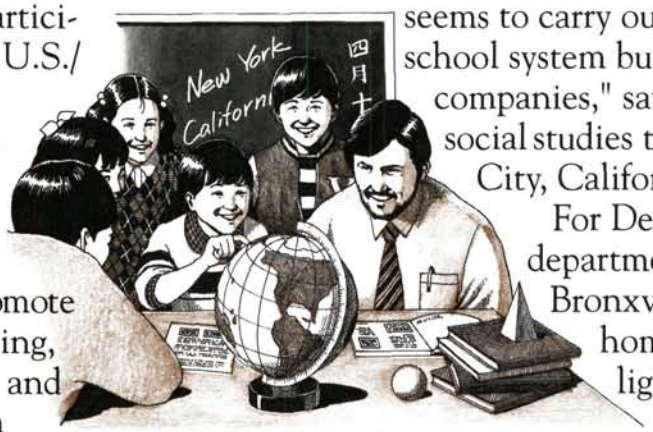
Japan and America: Where the Twain Meet

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," Kipling wrote long ago, and even today that saying sums up the feelings of many Americans and Japanese toward each other. But William Brinker, a high school social studies teacher from Farmington Hills, Michigan, disagrees. "The gulf between our cultures exists, but it can be bridged. We just have to work harder at understanding one another."

Brinker was a participant in the annual U.S./Japan Teachers Exchange Program sponsored by Hitachi. Now in its fourth year, this exchange helps promote mutual understanding, cultural awareness, and friendship between our societies on a personal level.



Since 1987, the program has sponsored the visits of 16 American teachers to Japan and five Japanese to the United States. Last year saw the largest exchange so far: four American and three Japanese teachers. For three weeks, they toured the sites, taught children, and lived in the homes of their hosts. For most, it was their first direct exposure to the culture they had so often taught about. Even for Brinker, who had spent time in Japan 36 years ago as a serviceman, the experience was eye-opening. "I came away with a much better understanding of the Japanese people," he says.

As teachers, the American visitors were struck by the way Japanese parents support the school system and the respect students show in the classroom. "The support and love of the family seems to carry out not only in the school system but also into their companies," says Greg Alvarado, a social studies teacher from Daly City, California.

For Delia Grogan-Selby, a department chairperson from Bronxville, New York, the home stay was a highlight of her visit. "I felt like I had parachuted into my own family, but it was Japan," she says.

Hitachi is proud to sponsor the U.S./Japan Teachers Exchange Program. We believe its positive impact will multiply as returning teachers share their personal experiences with students, colleagues, and friends at home.

For more information, write: Hitachi, P.O. Box 7515, Grand Central Station, New York, NY, 10163.

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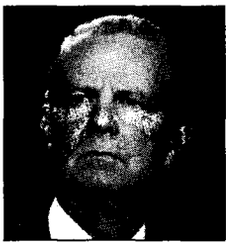

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CORRESPONDENCE

Et tu, Michael?

To the editors:

The astonishing deference to Pat Buchanan expressed in Michael Kinsley's January 27 TRB column ("Can We Stand Pat?") can, I assume, be attributed to the fact that Washington "insiders" are willing to accommodate and watch out for even the most vile of their brethren. If Buchanan had appeared from anywhere outside of the Beltway, it is inconceivable that TNR would treat him as anything other than the racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic demagogue that he is.

And contrary to Kinsley's assertions, Buchanan is all too willing to dissemble and lie about his record in order to avoid criticism. For example, when confronted with one of his openly anti-gay statements during a talk at Dartmouth College, rather than standing by his well-documented view that homosexuality is a crime against nature, Buchanan feigned offense and vehemently denied that he had described AIDS as "God's revenge." (He had, in fact, written that AIDS was "nature's revenge.") He has used similar evasions in his recent efforts to distance himself from his long record of anti-Semitic statements.

Many of us outside the Beltway watch in horror as Buchanan's bigotry is treated as a serious, legitimate part of the American political dialogue—albeit with the sort of affectionate clucking and head-shaking usually reserved for a devilish prep-schooler. Political and moral principles are apparently no match for charm and collegiality in Washington. I suppose we should look forward to future TNR columns pining for the rehabilitation of the notoriously affable Joe McCarthy.

ERIC T. SCHNEIDERMAN
New York, New York

To the editors:

Michael Kinsley says a political commentator "must have opinions on everything and spew them like an open fire hydrant," that Pat Buchanan in particular "needs dozens of opinions a week to fulfill his professional obligations." Kinsley's sentences are full of imperatives—"must," "needs," and "obligations"—but the urgency at which he hints is the product of the pundits', and their employers', fevered imaginations. Hey, I like editorial opinion as much as the next fella, but an enormous percentage of the commentary I encounter these days seems invented for the occasion, not believed.

As for Kinsley's suggestion that good political commentators "disconcert people, confound settled views, even give offense," that's true—to the extent that it is true—because they prefer sound and fury to substance. No, the psychologies of commentators and politicians are not "completely different," as Kinsley would have it; they have grown more and more alike, commentators having caught the politicians' disease. Commentators, too, are now interested primarily in retaining and expanding their constituencies, with the content of their arguments, unsurprisingly, taking the back seat.

I'm not disconcerted, confounded, or offended by Kinsley's TRB—I'm merely appalled that he now dignifies the manufacture of opinion as a "professional obligation." Et tu, Michael?

CHRIS GOODRICH
New York, New York

Clintonectomy

To the editors:

For those of Sidney Blumenthal's political predilections ("The Anointed," February 3), Governor Bill Clinton's Democratic Leadership Council ties need to be softened, qualified, even explained away.

For the independent voters Clinton will need for election, however, what probably needs more elaboration is what hallucinogen prompted a Rhodes scholar already in his mid-20s to look at George McGovern in 1972 and see a president of the United States.

Has Clinton been thoroughly detoxed?

ROBERT H. CHESKY
Brighton, Michigan

To the editors:

In "Sex and the Candidate" (editorial, February 3), you tell us that "ranking aides to a rival candidate are spreading rumors—utterly unsubstantiated—that Clinton is currently involved with women other than his wife."

Later in the editorial you declare: "If it's clear that a rival is spreading [damaging rumors] with utter disregard for the truth, that candidate ought to be exposed for his actions." Well, OK, who's spreading the utterly unsubstantiated rumors about Clinton?

THOMAS F. DRISCOLL
Metamora, Illinois

Keep the aspidistra flying

To the editors:

Tony Rothman ("Reader Rip-Off," February 3) summons up all kinds of technological wizardry in an attempt to reduce the price of books by two-thirds. His ultimate fantasy seems to be the elimination of every middleman in the book business, leaving only the author, with his home computer, and the reader, ordering from a central on-line clearinghouse. The concept of "out-of-print" is eliminated by simply keeping all books "in print" on a computer, and allowing anyone to "order" a copy by pressing a few buttons.

As a secondhand bookseller dealing largely in out-of-print books, may I offer a somewhat different perspective? In Rothman's world, people know exactly what they want. The only problem would be getting a specific book to the reader. In the real world of bookselling, the problem is less matching book A to customer A on any given day (and for $7.50, at that) than getting customer A to realize that the world of books consists of more than the particular title he is looking for at that particular moment.

This is hardly a straw man. Any book dealer who interacts with his customers on a day-to-day basis knows intuitively that the surest sign of a dead brain is the person who marches up to the front desk with a little piece of paper in his hand, thrusts it at the bookseller, and says, "Do you have this book?" If by some chance you don't have this particular title in stock, he ignores the other 10,000 titles you have on the shelves and marches out the door as fast as he marched in, presumably on to the next shop. Now it would be a blessing, I suppose, to press a button and produce (within Rothman's prescribed one minute) this customer's book for him. But the problem remains: How do you get people to go beyond their particular interest or demand of the moment, and consider what else may be out there? By way of example: I have personally sold about twenty copies (since 1984) of Margaret Bourke-White's *Dear Fatherland, Rest Quietly*—not by pressing a button, but by pressing this precious book (which is her description in word and picture of Germany in the spring of 1945) into the hands of twenty people who had never even heard of it before they walked into my shop. That they had never heard of it is not too surprising, since it came out in 1946 and was only briefly reprinted once since then.

Under Rothman's solution, since the only major remaining frames of reference will be either an on-line catalog (which can only give the briefest of summaries to each listed title, and which will necessarily omit tens of thousands of worthwhile titles from the twentieth century alone) or a good library (try getting into the stacks of one of *these* without multiple forms of identification and

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affiliation), the trend will be toward an atomized group of book consumers, safe at home, who will progressively lack both the inclination to care about and the opportunity to know about most of what has gone before them.

ANDY MOURSUND
Bethesda, Maryland

Expoed

To the editors:

In reference to John B. Judis's excellent but depressing report on Expo '92 ("Show and Tell," January 20) I would like to correct several items: it is unfair to describe our proposal for the U.S. Pavilion as less ambitious than the Predock scheme. In fact, of the nine invited competitors, who included Robert Venturi, Frank Gehry, and Cesar Pelli, among others, our scheme came closest to fulfilling the U.S. Information Agency mandate. That is why it was selected.

The lowest bid by a Spanish contractor was $16 million, covering the first phase of construction of the U.S. Pavilion. The $26 million figure cited by Judis was a USIA projected final cost. Although the targeted budget of $12 million could have been met by a reduced scheme, which could have been added to later if funding became available, this course of action was not pursued by the USIA.

Meyers is incorrectly spelled. It should read Myers.

BARTON MYERS
Los Angeles, California

The writer is principal of Barton Myers Associates.

Out of court

To the editors:

It was dismaying to see your magazine publish an article like the one on a reporter's efforts to track down the truth about the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas story ("Dirt Trail," January 6 & 13). Bob Cohn, apparently unable to come up with a story for his own publication, *Newsweek*, turns instead to a what-a-clever-fellow-I-am "press" piece. He gathers seamy rumors about the personal lives of the two principals and informs readers of his efforts, usually unsuccessful, in determining if they are true. The result is a piece that has all the journalistic virtues of raw FBI reports.

In one example, he writes that a Republican told him that Hill was a lesbian and the source further provided him with the name of her lover, identified as another professor at the University of Oklahoma. In parentheses, Cohn writes that he talked to some people on campus who didn't think it was true and then notes he was unable to reach the woman said to be her lover. That's it. The allegation just lies there.

There's nothing wrong with seeking and checking out allegations no matter how tawdry some might find them. But if they don't check out, they shouldn't get published (not even under the guise of informing readers of the process of checking things out). TNR's seeming justification for trotting out rumors about these two appears to be a demonstration of the lengths people would go to buttress their cases in favor of either Hill or Thomas. Cohn writes that he was surprised by the willingness of people to spin, manipulate, and lie. That's astonishingly naive and should hardly be news to anybody who watched the confirmation hearings.

NEIL A. LEWIS
Washington, D.C.

The writer covered the Thomas nomination for *The New York Times*.

Bob Cohn replies:

Although it's no secret that reporters routinely are lied to and spun, the degree of manipulation in the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill episode was unusual even by Washington standards. It is true that I printed rumors that wouldn't normally appear in *Newsweek* or TNR. But each allegation is debunked in the same paragraph in which it is presented. The section Lewis objects to begins with two sentences discounting the accuracy of what I was told: "The conservative activists were less charitable to Hill. Their tips were fantastic, though they rarely led to any solid proof." Why print them at all? You can't persuade readers of the extent to which people lie just by writing: "People lie." Good journalism requires evidence.

Tomato-throwing

To the editors:

Although I could not help but be pleased to see Stanley Kauffmann divert his attention from Eastern European Dadaist art cinema long enough to review a film, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, that more than six or eight of your readers are likely to see ("Alabama and Elsewhere," February 3), I must question his accusation of cliché.

It is interesting, isn't it, that no one objected to decades of film and television that presented Southerners and their region only in terms of stereotype. Who, outside the South, had a word to say about the endless parade of cruel masters, vicious sheriffs, and vacuous belles? Who questioned the apparent conviction of so many in the entertainment industry that life south of Maryland and east of New Mexico was some bizarre hybrid of *Gone With the Wind* and "The Dukes of Hazzard"? All this was accepted and remains so; the barely human Southerner is the last allowed stereotype. No sane producer would touch a project involving Chinese laundrymen or black domestics, yet few have any compunction against portraying all of us as ignorant, inbred, and savage.

When other marginalized groups gain the power to produce realistic, nonstereotyped accounts of their lives and cultures, the critics applaud, as they should. When Southerners do the same they are accused of trading in a "milieu [that] is wearing away into cliché." What critic would say that black or Hispanic or Third World filmmakers are trading in an "overused milieu"? None I know of, which is as it should be; it is *not* the critic's place to condemn those who take the initiative in telling their own stories.

Yet when several positive films about the South happen to appear within a few years of one another, Kauffmann takes to the warpath. It never occurs to him that *Fried Green Tomatoes, Steel Magnolias*, and others might be a healthy rejection of painful and demeaning stereotypes. To his mind, they herald some menacing new trend that threatens to bombard him and fellow aesthetes with deadly "scented angst." Oh, the horror!

JASON P. MITCHELL
Decatur, Alabama

Stanley Kauffmann replies:

My root objection to *Fried Green Tomatoes, Steel Magnolias*, et al. is precisely that they *sustain* their own kinds of "painful and demeaning stereotypes." And, by the way, there are both a cruel master and a vicious sheriff in *Fried Green Tomatoes*.•

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TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

Buchanan again

Reluctantly, this column returns to the subject of Patrick Buchanan. The editor in chief of this journal writes (Cambridge Diarist, February 10) that I have failed to denounce Buchanan as an anti-Semite because I am "structurally enmeshed" with him. (In my few waking hours not toiling away for THE NEW REPUBLIC, I moonlight on the CNN program "Crossfire," where Buchanan was my co-host until he launched his presidential bid.) A *Washington Post* columnist named Richard Cohen charges that whatever views I may have on Buchanan and anti-Semitism are discredited because of a "conflict of interest." Ditto the views of others who have appeared regularly on TV with Buchanan, including TNR's Fred Barnes and Morton Kondracke.

It's not clear what Cohen thinks we should do about this alleged conflict of interest. As the editor in chief complains, I have not forced my views about Buchanan and anti-Semitism on anyone. Until now, I have not even volunteered them. But when fellow journalists call up to ask my opinion, I have answered as best I can. My "Crossfire" connection with Buchanan is the only reason anyone cares about my opinion in the first place. Should I refuse to discuss it? Or would my "conflict of interest" disappear if I happened to agree with Cohen?

I confess, if that's the word, that I have allowed my opinion of Buchanan to be influenced by the experience of working closely with him—being "structurally enmeshed," as the editor in chief would have it. Is that a "conflict of interest" or common sense? I was surprised to discover that, despite Buchanan's snarly reputation, he was genuinely friendly and gracious. As a Jew, I never felt any hostility from Buchanan on that score, never heard him make a disparaging remark about Jews, never noticed any difference in the way he treats Jews and non-Jews. Of course all this is not proof that he isn't, at heart, an anti-Semite. But it surely is relevant evidence, not a "conflict of interest."

To be sure, closeness can be distorting as well as clarifying. Although I am not a close pal of Patrick Buchanan, it is too late for him or me (or Richard Cohen or Marty Peretz) to claim immunity from the "inside the Beltway" coziness that can corrupt judgment. All I can say is that I have not been engaged in a whitewash of Buchanan. When he appeared recently as a guest on "Crossfire," I worked him over harder on the anti-Semitism issue, among others, than any other TV interviewer has done so far. Transcripts available. In a recent TRB column (January 27), I offered up a couple of arguably racist Buchananisms that the American media had missed. (They have since been widely repeated.) Unlike, perhaps, some other Washington journalists who have worked closely with Buchanan, I do not think the anti-Semitism charge is outrageous or patently false. Buchanan has said many things that legitimately raise the question. But to raise it is not to answer it.

None of Buchanan's individual remarks is, in my view, the "smoking sound bite." Consider, for example, his drumbeat of support for those accused of Nazi war crimes. (And leave aside irksome recent evidence that Buchanan may be vindicated on his favorite case, John Demjanjuk.) If Richard Cohen or TRB took up falsely accused Nazis as a hobbyhorse, no reasonable person (I hope) would accuse them of anti-Semitism. It would be seen, quite rightly, as good journalistic iconoclasm and/or admirable defense of civil liberties in extremis.

Buchanan can't get off so easy. His other published comments on Nazis, Israel, the Jewish lobby—and his general indifference to civil liberties—put this eccentric passion for accused Nazis in an eerie light. But they don't make it prima facie anti-Semitic.

Anti-Semitism is not a disease you can give a blood test for and get a definitive yes or no. Three factors make me hesitate to apply the label to Buchanan. First, he does have warm personal relations with many Jews. Despite the old saw about "some of my best friends," that surely counts for something. Second, I believe Buchanan sincerely thinks the accusations are unfair; in his heart, he doesn't think he is an anti-Semite. Of course it's possible to be an anti-Semite without knowing it—but surely it's harder. Third, Buchanan's controversial remarks about the Israel lobby, Nazis, and so on do not, I think, hide coarser views. Buchanan is—or at least he was until he started running for president—a frank man. He says—or used to say—what he thinks. Make what you wish of his past public statements, but I believe they are not a case of the mask slipping.

In all this Buchanan is different from, say, David Duke. Duke surely does not work and socialize comfortably with Jews. He surely does not deny in his own heart that he is a Jew hater. And Duke's record and personality give you every reason to assume that what he says is the palest dilution of what he really thinks.

My real answer to the question "Is Buchanan an anti-Semite?" is: give me a definition and I'll tell you. If your definition is someone who viscerally hates Jews as individuals and as a race, the answer is no. If you have a more sophisticated and nuanced definition, my answer might be different. But the trouble with more sophisticated definitions is that they tar someone like Buchanan with the same brush as David Duke and Adolf Hitler and other anti-Semites by any definition. And the proper response to a Pat Buchanan is surely not the same as the proper response to a David Duke.

William F. Buckley, whom Marty Peretz quotes with approval as having concluded that Buchanan's past statements "amounted to anti-Semitism," said the other day that he would vote for Buchanan if he were a New Hampshire resident. Presumably that is not the right response to a genuine anti-Semite.

I hesitate to apply the label "anti-Semite" for one more reason. Some of those most eager to brand Buchanan are also among those who deplore (as part of the deplorable "political correctness" epidemic) the facile overuse of terms like "racist" and "sexist." And they're right: words like that work as censors of debate and ultimately lose their power when used promiscuously. The magazine you hold in your hands has been the loudest voice in the land condemning such labels as the enemies of openness and complexity in the public debate. The same is true, in spades, of a term like anti-Semite. There are times, of course, when all these labels are appropriate. But in today's political culture there is no particular courage in being the first to use them, and no special shame in hanging back.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 24, 1992

WHAT FOREIGN POLICY?

A great historian once wrote that history has its "plastic moments," when the old has departed and the new has not yet arrived, and the course of history may be less resistant to the actions of men. The late 1980s and the early '90s have been such a time. The collapse of the principles of communism and of the power of the most significant Communist country in the world has given the international arena an unexpected plasticity: a whole variety of political, social, and economic revisions now seems possible, and so does a swift and considerable expansion (never mind a swift and universal expansion, the recent news is good enough) of liberty and prosperity. There is only one nation, of course, that has the might and the philosophical élan to move these changes along, and that is this nation. The government of the United States, however, has risen to this plastic moment with a foreign policy that is, well, pretty plastic—that is, with a policy lacking in depth, without much substance, contrived as a substitute for the more natural and durable materials of statecraft, and here and there more than a little tacky.

No, we are not exactly accusing the Bush administration of prudence. We have no particular problem with prudence: times of transition, obscure times, require level heads. But prudence is a tactic, not a strategy; a means, not an end; a disposition, not an idea. It cannot stand for the whole of foreign policy. Nor is prudence necessarily the enemy of imagination, as the administration defensively wishes us to think. It is, quite the contrary, imagination's vigilant friend, watching and warning against the excesses of—what?

That is the Bush administration's problem. It seeks to move carefully and professionally, but toward what goal? The confusions in our foreign policy seem endless. We boast that we are the only superpower in the world, but give a new and exaggerated prestige to multilateralism. We are for self-determination in Russia and the remains of the Soviet Union (well, belatedly), but against it in Croatia and the remains of Yugoslavia. We demand democracy in the east, but not in the Gulf. We denounce communism in weeny Cuba, and treat with it in humongous China. We grasp the plight of the Palestinians, but could not care less about the Kurds. We use and then worship American military force in the desert, but do not care to hear that we did not finish the job. We worry about militant Islam in north Africa, but deal cordially with the mullahs in Tehran. As for Japan, our policy appears to consist of empty jingoist rhetoric, absurd apologetics about American products, and a single foolhardy terrorist act by the president of the United States against the prime minister of Japan.

All of this is carried out in the name of a "new world order." It is an inspiring phrase; but it has a variety of meanings, empirical and ideal. Empirically, a new world order certainly exists. But it was hardly the creation of the United States. This administration has been, more precisely, a victim of serendipity. It has watched as the enemies crumbled and the lies were exposed. To be sure, it watched carefully and well. Still, watching is a passive thing. Most of the Bush administration's achievements with respect to the new world order that really exists may be described as absence-of-crisis management.

As Robert W. Tucker shows in this issue (see page 24), in an essay on Woodrow Wilson and George Bush, the "new world order" once had an ideal meaning, too. Yes, Wilson was lofty and failed in his campaign for the League of Nations; but his insistence upon the visionary dimension of foreign policy continues to haunt our statecraft, and rightly. It is (or it should be) a requirement of statecraft to have a vision of the world. Statecraft is not exclusively a problem-solving affair. The diplomats who created the alliances and arrangements of the postwar world also lived in a plastic hour, and were also at the mercy of dramatic events in distant places, and also had to go cautiously, not least because of a certain new weapon; but still they innovated, and then carried the case for their innovations to their countries. The Bush administration, by contrast, utterly lacks the sensation of history. It is an administration of fixers, when we need builders. It imputes its luck to its skill. The "key players" in the White House and the State Department seem rather reluctant to pick up the key. In these dizzying days, of course, we could have done much worse. But we could have done much better. •

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NOTEBOOK

BUSHISM OF THE WEEK: "And let me say in conclusion, thanks for the kids. I learned an awful lot about bathtub toys—about how to work the telephone. One guys knows—several of them know their own phone numbers—preparation to go to the dentist. A lot of things I'd forgotten. So it's been a good day." —January 21, at a Head Start center in Catonsville, Maryland

(thanks to Peter Higbee, Franconia, New Hampshire)

QUAYLISM OF THE WEEK: "The first black president will be a politician who is black." —Virginia Governor Doug Wilder at a recent luncheon at *The Washington Times*

CÓMO SE LLAMA?

In Shift, U.S. Will Aid Peru's Army Against Drugs and Rebels

—*The New York Times,* January 25

U.S. Role In Peru On Hold

—*The Washington Post,* same day

(thanks to Michele Christie, Alexandria, Virginia)

RIGHTS AND WRONGS: The State Department last week released its annual survey of Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. The department's Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, which produces the document, is a feisty body (it released harsh criticism of Beijing on the day Li Peng met with George Bush) and rightly cited offenses committed by the government of Israel, a detail lovingly focused on by Peter Jennings's "ABC World News Tonight." Jennings also cited the report's finding that in 1991, Palestinian vigilantes killed more of their own by half in the territories than did the Israelis. More conspicuous to other readers, however, was the hair-raising account of abuses by Israel's neighbors in the Levant and Fertile Crescent, which Jennings ignored. The Syrian rights record is one of "widespread and systematic torture ... gouging out of eyes, extraction of fingernails and toenails, and electric shocks to sensitive parts of the body." Iraq? "Political killing and torture continue, denial of due process, arbitrary detentions ... remain widespread, freedoms of speech and press ... are nonexistent." On Dan Rather's show the same night, film smuggled out of Iraq showed high officials of the regime in acts of intimate brutality against Shiite prisoners, speaking unabashedly of "extirpation" and "extermination." "Blood should flow," said one, "for twenty years." For all the blandishments from suave Western-educated spokespeople (Tariq Aziz, Hanan Ashrawi, etc.), no one in the Arab orbit is surprised by these indictments. No one is even moved to deny the charges. Victims and victimizers alike know the ways of their world, even if others in the West do not. •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

PANIC MODE

By Fred Barnes

When President Bush's advisers read the State of the Union address drafted by Tony Snow, the chief White House speechwriter, they had an anxiety attack. Snow's text was fine for another occasion, but not for the nationally televised speech Bush was to give on January 28. So on Friday, January 24, the Bushies made two desperate phone calls. Peggy Noonan, author of Bush's memorable speech at the 1988 Republican convention, was summoned from New York. She set up shop at the pricey Jefferson Hotel five blocks from the White House and produced a fresh speech by the next morning. The other call went to Roger Ailes, Bush's media consultant in 1988 but now out of politics. He said he'd be in town Monday, January 27, to close the sale of his apartment in suburban Alexandria, Virginia, and would drop by the White House. As it turned out, Ailes spent most of Monday and Tuesday, speech day, manicuring the new text and coaching Bush on his delivery.

The decision to order up a new speech wasn't made by Bush or Samuel Skinner, the White House chief of staff, but by Robert Teeter, Bush's re-election campaign manager. That gives you a pretty good idea where power now lies in the Bush presidency. For Teeter, the speech had to meet two priorities, one general, one specific. The general aim was to present Bush in the best light—inspirational, tough, caring—as he spelled out his scheme to jolt the economy. The other was New Hampshire-driven. Bush's chief goal for the moment is to consolidate his Republican base and win a smashing victory in the New Hampshire primary on February 18. This means attracting disgruntled conservatives.

Thus Bush veered sharply to the right in the State of the Union, angling for a chunk of challenger Patrick Buchanan's constituency in New Hampshire, the size of which had begun to scare the White House. He adopted a tone of American triumphalism. Bush started by declaring the United States "won" the cold war, then worked various Desert Storm analogies. He twice stated "this will

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not stand" in referring to economic stagnation. The theory was that the phrase wouldn't ring in Bush's peroration—"I look at hard times and I make this vow: this will not stand"—unless he had brought it up before. Well, that was the theory anyway.

Bush tossed nugget after nugget to conservatives. A week before the speech, Teeter and Skinner huddled over lunch in the Roosevelt Room with conservative senators and representatives. The session had been arranged by Housing Secretary Jack Kemp when he met earlier with Teeter and Fred Malek, the campaign administrator. Teeter and Skinner got an earful. The conservatives said Bush should propose a cut in the capital gains tax rate to 15 percent, anathema to Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady. They urged him to set a deadline for Congress to act on his economic package. They argued for deep spending cuts and the line-item veto, a proposal budget director Richard Darman believes is a waste of time because it won't pass. House Republican Whip Newt Gingrich said Bush should tell his administration what he wants, as he did in the Persian Gulf crisis, not settle for what bureaucrats will accept. And the conservatives insisted Bush fire Brady and Darman.

They got the 15 percent rate, the deadline, and a Bush pitch for reduced spending. Meanwhile, Vice President Quayle persuaded Bush to beef up his defense of the Strategic Defense Initiative, a favorite of conservatives. And for the first time in over a year, Bush used the word "empower" in talking about the poor. It had been banned from the White House lexicon by Darman, angering right-wingers. Bush also named a new domestic policy czar at the White House, former Republican chairman Clayton Yeutter. This was designed to convince conservatives that Darman's influence was being reined in.

The tethering of Darman is an illusion. The domestic policy over which Yeutter rules has already been established, largely by Darman, in the State of the Union. It was crafted as Bush's election-year program and is supposed to last through election day. Changing it will be practically impossible with Darman still around. And Bush pointedly said he wants to keep the 1990 budget deal, another Darman creation. Tales of a clash between Skinner and Darman, with Darman losing, are exaggerated. Darman is also resourceful. He's a pal of Teeter's from prior campaigns (1988, 1984, 1976) and was involved in the last-minute speech preparations. In fact, he came up with the idea to use the phrase "this will not stand."

The speech worked, keeping in mind that Bush's main goal was enhancing his re-election chances. One-shot tax breaks may be gimmicks, but they're popular. (When Kemp later criticized tax credits proposed by Bush, he was dressed down by Teeter and Skinner.) Gingrich grinned through the full fifty-five minutes of the speech. *Human Events*, the pro-Buchanan conservative weekly, said Bush sounded "positively Reaganesque." Indeed he did. Noonan was Reagan's favorite speechwriter too.

The Bush political recovery proceeds. I take the unconventional view that the rebound began on his bumbling trip to Japan. Yes, I know opinion polls don't support this. Yes, I know his supplicant method was crude, touting the trip's purpose as "jobs, jobs, jobs." But politics often responds to crude gestures. In Japan Bush managed to erase his image as interested only in foreign policy. Then, stumping in New Hampshire, he blurted over and over, "I care." That wasn't subtle either. "The trip to New Hampshire got panned," says Ailes, "but he went up 12 points." Now the State of the Union has given him an agenda and talking points. The question is whether Bush can do anything with these.

If Bush's first speech after the State of the Union—to the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce—is indicative, he can't. It was a dud. "That's the difference between Peggy and non-Peggy," says a White House adviser. Bush recounted all the goodies in the State of the Union without packaging them in an inspiring whole. His best line was a lame joke. "These last few weeks in Washington have been pretty high pressure, what with all the experts and instant analysis and the columnists giving unsolicited advice," he said. "Thank goodness the Super Bowl is over." Bush's next test is the March 20 deadline. If Democrats don't pass anything, what's his plan? He doesn't have one, except to blame Congress for doing nothing. If they pass an anti-recession bill with a tax rate hike—this is likely—he'll veto it. Then what? It's too soon to move back to the center. Conservatives can't be taken for granted until after the GOP convention in August. In desperation, Bush will try to explain himself to the nation. Noonan and Ailes, stay near the phone. •

Peace at last in El Salvador.

WAR & REMEMBRANCE

By Charles Lane

SAN SALVADOR

Ghosts attended the ceremony marking the end of the war in El Salvador last week. Speakers took turns invoking the tiny nation's fallen giants, names that became familiar to Americans during the twelve-year conflict: José Napoleón Duarte, consumed by cancer, a metaphor for his country's political condition; Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, gunned down as he said mass in 1980; Roque Dalton, the poet-revolutionary killed by his own comrades. Dalton was mentioned—maybe out of contrition, maybe out of sheer brass—by the very man who participated in killing him, guerrilla comandante Joaquin Villalobos. And no sooner had Romero been hailed than his probable assassin, Roberto d'Aubuisson, received applause from rightists who see him as a hero, not so much in spite of the murder as because of it. Death is about to claim d'Aubuisson himself; he lies comatose with cancer in a private hospital. And, of course, there

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was mention of the 75,000 mostly civilian dead killed over the last twelve years.

The intermingling of harsh memories and dizzying ironies has created an atmosphere of collective introspection in El Salvador. People seem to be seeking meaning in so much destruction. Was the carnage in vain? Or will history record the Salvadoran war as the tragic but inevitable consequence of a small, underdeveloped society's emergence into the modern world?

The war's origins, in fact, lie not so much in El Salvador's poverty as in a period of political and economic development that began over twenty years ago. The 1960s and 1970s were a time of rapid economic growth in all of Central America. In El Salvador especially, economic change gave rise to middle and working classes whose demands for political participation were channeled through the new Christian Democratic Party of José Napoleón Duarte. In rural areas, discontent grew among campesinos for whom liberation theology seemed to offer a redemptive alternative to traditional fatalism.

This tentative movement toward a more modern, participatory political order was aborted for two reasons, the first structural: El Salvador's political system refused to accommodate greater participation. The coffee barons and the corrupt colonels who kept order on their behalf responded with repression and electoral fraud. The military annulment of Duarte's 1972 victory in the presidential elections radicalized many of those who once tried to work within the system; they turned to the still-incipient, armed Marxist groups that had already begun plotting revolution.

The second obstacle to modernization was cultural: the endemic radicalism of Salvadoran political ideologies. Isolated on the far west coast of Central America, El Salvador became a tropical breeding ground for extremists. The right's anti-communism was a religion, a potent mix of brutal defense of upper-class privilege and nationalist populism. The guerrilla left was founded by Cayetano Carpio, who wove a cult of personality around himself—until he committed suicide in one of his group's fratricidal internal struggles. By 1979, when a group of reformist colonels tried to stage a coup, the polarization had gone too far. There was no stopping either revolution or counterrevolution, which in 1981 burst onto American TV screens at the rate of 800 death-squad victims per month.

Though the war's origins were internal, the East-West conflict sustained it. Indeed, U.S. tolerance of military repression and election rigging—in the name of anti-communism—had been a vital element of the old Salvadoran order. Cuba began training Salvadoran revolutionaries in the '60s. The Reagan administration at first saw only the Cuban role in the crisis; its response in the early '80s was to countenance rightist butchery, on the Kirkpatrick logic that as bad as the army might be, communism, once triumphant, would be immutable. The policy changed only after Congress and administration moderates insisted that the internal causes of the conflict be addressed as well. Reagan supported Duarte and sought to splice his civilian rule with a military made more humane and efficient under the tutelage of U.S. counterinsurgency experts.

The ultimate price tag of U.S. policy exceeded $5 billion, but it failed to achieve its major aims. Duarte's corrupt party never became a permanent vital center. The massacre of six Jesuits in November 1989 proved the army's enduring lawlessness and contempt for human rights. A guerrilla offensive the same month almost toppled the government and proved the rebels could not be quashed. The Salvadoran war is a humbling reminder to Americans of the blood spilled to hold up our end of the cold war, and of the costs of being blind to the threats to Latin democracy that didn't emanate from Havana.

The U.S. failure, however, wasn't absolute. The U.S. was right to oppose a military victory by the rebels, which most Salvadorans didn't want, and which might have led to even greater death and disruption. U.S.-backed elections were limited but authentic exercises that induced the far right to moderate—and helped the guerrillas' eventual moderation by inducing their civilian allies to risk a return to political competition. U.S. preachments to the army about human rights and civilian authority may have been ignored; but the mere fact that these ideas were aired in Salvadoran barracks was progress.

And if counterinsurgency failed in El Salvador, so did insurgency. Like Kirkpatrick, the guerrillas and their Cuban and Nicaraguan mentors believed in the irreversibility of Marxist-Leninist government. Rebel millenarianism—not just government stubbornness—explains why the peace agreement could not have been had five years ago. The guerrillas began to grasp their historical predicament only after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the defeat of the Sandinistas, and the Soviet implosion. But the comandantes' worst political failure was to misjudge the Salvadoran people. Outside of their own dedicated, well-organized supporters, the guerrillas' sabotage and murder steadily cost them popularity.

Nevertheless, the guerrillas can claim, rightly, that none of the changes that have come to El Salvador would have happened if they had not started their war, and if their supporters had not made extraordinary sacrifices. If the rebels did not represent the Salvadoran people, they did force El Salvador's elite and the U.S. to take the needs of the people into account, something neither had really done before. And in the end, the armed left had the maturity to adjust its political methods and ideology—to settle for membership in its country's political class, not domination of it. When the guerrillas finally came back to San Salvador, it was not the triumphal olive drab march they once drilled for in Managua, but a gray procession of business suits and proper pumps. That took a certain humility.

The peace agreement addresses both the structural and cultural causes of El Salvador's conflict. If adhered to in full by both sides, it will eliminate all vestiges of military praetorianism and will guarantee political participation for the left as long as it gives up its arms. Obscure forces on the extreme right are said to be preparing ter-

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rorist acts to provoke a rupture in the peace. The fear of crime has become widespread, and land disputes among former combatants will soon begin.

Efforts to ruin the peace will probably fail, however, largely because, in a post-cold war world, the U.S. and four Hispanic countries are backing the presence of hundreds of U.N. observers. More important, after over a decade in which the country's factions have futilely tried to impose their positions on everyone else, the contenders have arrived at something novel in Salvadoran life: a national consensus. The accords are an agreement that Salvadoran society should be a representative democracy with a market economy, and that differences will be worked out within those parameters. For El Salvador, war has been the crucible in which long-denied political development finally began. Who won the war? I asked one of El Salvador's most decent politicians, Abram Rodriguez, a Christian Democrat who survived the military crackdown in 1972, then later served his friend Duarte as vice president in alliance with the military: "The Salvadoran people won," he responded. Sounds like a cliché, but it just might be true.

CHARLES LANE, a writer for *Newsweek*, covered Central America from 1987 to 1990.

What foreign policy? I

BAKER'S HALF DOZEN

By Morton Kondracke

The snow begins to fall in Moscow in October, but it was not until December 12 that Secretary of State James Baker called for an international conference on aiding the former Soviet Union, and it was not until January 22 that it was held. Even then, it took pressure from the Europeans to get the administration to increase its pledge and mount an airlift. Meanwhile, U.S. relations with Japan are souring—conceivably endangering a vital partnership for the future—yet the secretary of state has been to Tokyo only three times since taking office, and stayed away as the president was making a botch of his visit last month.

Baker aides explain the Russian aid delay partly by blaming the Treasury Department, which for a long time balked at letting the new republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States into the IMF. As to Japan, they say that Baker, a former treasury secretary, hasn't wanted to interfere in the business of Cabinet officers with economic and trade portfolios, but has met often with Japanese leaders. He didn't go on the president's trip, they say, because he needed a rest after 251,000 miles of travel to forty countries in 1991—including Japan in November—and anyway doesn't like to be an "add-on" on presidential trips.

But there's another explanation for these policy gaps—and for much else that goes on in James Baker's State Department: Baker trusts only a handful of loyal assistants to perform important tasks for him, and they are vastly overextended. Dennis Ross, State's director of policy planning, is Baker's chief assistant for both the CIS and the Middle East—which means that if negotiations are under way on one, the other moves to the back burner. Ross has admitted that one reason State did not pay attention to the rising menace of Saddam Hussein in early 1990 was his and Baker's preoccupation with German reunification and Soviet affairs. (Another reason was George Bush's policy of appeasing Saddam, but that might have been reversed if Ross had intervened with Baker and then Baker had intervened with Bush.)

In a State Department of 8,000 persons, Baker thoroughly trusts only two or three other people besides Ross: counsellor Robert Zoellick, who is also undersecretary for economic affairs; Margaret Tutwiler, his spokeswoman and political adviser; and Deputy Secretary Lawrence Eagleburger, the only career diplomat in the Seventh Floor in-group. Zoellick is responsible for U.S.-Japan relations, but he also worked on keeping a unified Germany in NATO and handles European security issues, U.S.-Mexico free trade talks, and global environmental policy—while overseeing paper flow to Baker. Tutwiler keeps Baker's press notices favorable but also devises showy short-term policies such as the Russian airlift. A fifth member of the Baker gang, Robert Kimmitt, had the job of overseeing the rest of the State Department but got so exhausted in three years that he left to become ambassador to Germany.

Others at State enjoy Baker's trust in their areas of expertise because they have produced successes for him in the past. One is Assistant Secretary for Latin America Bernard Aronson, a Democrat who helped get the administration out of the contra war in Nicaragua, Manuel Noriega out of Panama, and democracies installed in Central America. Another is Edward Derijian, who as ambassador in Damascus convinced Syria's Hafez Assad to join Baker's Mideast peace talks and now shares some of Ross's authority for the peace process. Two more are Reginald Bartholomew, who oversees arms control and nuclear proliferation policy, and Andrew Carpendale, a Sovietologist and Baker's chief speechwriter. (Baker speeches are often remarkably substantive forecasters of administration policy.)

Previous secretaries of state—notably George Shultz, whom Baker disdains—relied heavily on career foreign service officers. Baker announced in *Time* in 1989 that he didn't intend to be "captured" by State bureaucrats. His aides are frank about their belief that the regional bureaus—particularly those for Europe, East Asia, and the Near East—generally are incapable of devising creative policy. Careerists, in turn, resent the Baker gang's

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"arrogance" and "exclusiveness." Outsiders say Baker is interested in only two subjects—East-West relations and Arab-Israeli relations—and takes up others (such as Japan) only intermittently. One official sees Baker's operating style as "classic Machiavellian politics in a bureaucratic setting." Baker, this official says, "understands that knowledge is power. There almost never is an unfavorable twist in a story coming out of State. That's because only four people know what's going on, and they never say anything critical of Baker."

Baker's State Department is a microcosm of Bush's foreign policy apparat. On key decisions, only five or six people are in the know—Bush, Baker, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, national security adviser Brent Scowcroft, and sometimes Vice President Dan Quayle and CIA director Robert Gates—and they almost never talk out of school. This is in sharp contrast to Bush's domestic advisers, who fight openly over budget and tax policy, and in even sharper contrast to the foreign policy hierarchies in past administrations, which often were virtually at war.

The advantage of the Bush arrangement is that the American public and foreign governments get the sense that policy is being made in an orderly fashion, which isn't far from the truth. Baker, Cheney, Scowcroft, and Bush are all pals who worked closely together in the Ford administration. They also share the same "realist" outlook. The disadvantage, however, is that it's almost impossible for an outsider to break into the cozy circle and say, "Something is terribly wrong." This was the case before Saddam's invasion of Kuwait—when a few Pentagon and State officials warned of trouble—and after the Gulf war, when some of the same officials urged action to keep Saddam from butchering Kurds and Shiites.

Another problem is that policy debates are closed to public view. They do occur. Take Soviet policy. In the spring of 1989, when the White House was calling Gorbachev a "drugstore cowboy," Baker began to argue internally that he was a man who could be worked with, while Scowcroft, Gates, Quayle, and Cheney doubted that perestroika meant real reform. In September 1989 Baker became friends with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, taking him fly-fishing at his ranch in Wyoming. Bush was willing to move "beyond containment" in U.S. policy, but by October Baker was searching for "points of mutual advantage." Bush and Scowcroft began coming around to Baker's view after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and after the 1989 Malta summit, while Cheney stayed skeptical well into 1990, and even then doubted that Gorbachev would successfully steer the Soviet Union toward democracy.

After Yeltsin emerged as the leading democrat in the Soviet Union, the sides switched around. Cheney, Gates and Quayle wanted to promote the union's breakup; Baker and Bush wanted to keep it intact, and Scowcroft took a middle position, agreeing with Cheney on strategic grounds but questioning whether Yeltsin was stable. After the coup, the administration still backed Gorbachev—until last September, when Bush met with Ukrainian leader Leonid Kravchuk, who told him that the union was dead and urged him, "Don't smother us." Bush reportedly pulled off his interpreters' headphones and amazedly said to Scowcroft and Eagleburger that he'd never been told before about the depth of the republics' urge for independence. He immediately ordered White House, Treasury, and State Department aides to develop an aid package for Ukraine. Even so, Bush and Baker strove to prop up Gorbachev practically until the moment he fell in late December.

Administration officials say that Bush and his top aides have had "tough arguments"—all in private—over Soviet policy. They also have differences over Middle East policy. Ross, Baker's aide, has devised a no-blueprints peace strategy based on working closely with Israel. Baker generally follows Ross's advice—but occasionally barks at him when Israel's government balks at a U.S. initiative. Bush, Scowcroft, and Middle East aide Richard Haass tend to doubt that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir wants any attainable compromise with the Arabs and favor pressure tactics on the Israelis. Quayle and Cheney generally are strongly pro-Israel.

Collegial as the Bush gang has been these past three years, despite internal differences, the facade might not remain so smooth if Bush is re-elected and Baker, Cheney, and Quayle jockey for the 1996 presidential nomination. Baker aides say their boss is tired from constant travel but will stay in place if Bush wants him. Cheney flatly denies reports that he wants to be treasury secretary, and aides say he wants to stay at the Pentagon. Quayle presumably will have an advantage among Republican professionals as a result of his constant campaigning, but among neutrals within the administration there's a definite preference for Cheney, who's regarded as a person of conviction, brains, and charm. Baker is considered a great Washington operator and negotiator, but a probable bust as a candidate. "Did you ever look into his eyes when he smiles?" one White House official asked. "It makes your spine freeze." •

What foreign policy? II

OBSESSION

By Edward Luttwak

By now it has become obvious that U.S.-Japanese relations are the vital axis of world politics, but President Bush said not a word on the subject in his State of the Union speech. He did find time, however, to comment on the Arab-Israeli peace talks, after earlier speaking at length about the Middle East in conjunction with the Gulf war. Unreciprocated imports

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continue to claim the jobs of millions of Americans, but even after Desert Storm George Bush remained so preoccupied with security issues, in the Middle East especially, that U.S. trade officials badly in need of support for their difficult negotiations have found it impossible to capture his attention. The president does not nod off as Reagan did when they discussed non-tariff barriers, predatory subsidies, and others such. He simply refuses to meet them at all, and would not even include chief trade negotiator Carla Hills in his December visit to Japan—thereby destroying her effectiveness with the Japanese forever after. (Robert Mosbacher, past commerce secretary and present campaign manager, has been criticized for adding a slew of overpaid executives to the trip, but it was only their presence that kept the trade issue in focus at all.)

In fact, prior to his Pacific tour, Bush scarcely made a serious effort to bring himself up to speed on the economic issues that were bound to arise in Australia, Korea, and Japan. The man who follows with rapt attention every twist in Assad's policies, who is always avid for the latest gossip on the palace politics of the Saudi ruling family (Bush roots for Prince Sultan), and who knows the exact location of every apartment rented by Soviet immigrants in Israel, was so ill-informed when he set out on his travels that in Australia he evoked ridicule by stolidly denouncing European grain-export subsidies amidst massive farmers' demonstrations against parallel U.S. subsidies, while in Japan he was visibly ignorant of the contents of his own brief. After Bush proclaimed success in securing Japanese commitments to import 20,000 cars and $19 billion worth of parts, the White House had to admit that those were only targets (which Japanese auto industry leaders doubted they could meet), and the president himself simply could not explain how his demands were consistent with his oft-repeated attacks on "managed" trade. Ironically, the indignities of his Japan trip, from the cheap hucksterism of the Toys-R-Us opening to his undiplomatic visceral message to Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, obscured the president's very personal failure in Korea, where he so overstressed the "continued support" part of his message that his listing of U.S. complaints against one-sided Korean trade policies came off as an unconvincing afterthought (Korean officials declared the visit "a great success").

True enough, the issues Bush had to face in both Japan and Korea are too complex and subtle to be quickly digested from the usual briefing books and "talking points" that go with the president aboard Air Force One. But he had months to prepare himself, months during which he devoted endless hours to keeping himself informed on the most minute details of postwar Gulf security arrangements, the intrigues of intra-PLO politics, Saddam Hussein and all his undoings, every aspect of the peace talks, U.S.-Saudi relations, U.S.-Syrian relations, U.S.-Kuwaiti relations, U.S.-Egyptian relations, and of course Israeli settlements—astoundingly enough, his "No. 1 concern," according to intimates.

Why is George Bush so obsessed with the Middle East? One explanation is that after a lifetime in the business, he remains largely fixated on geopolitics, and from the 1950s until Gorbachev's devolution, the Middle East was certainly the most active arena of the U.S.-Soviet struggle. Europe was always more important, but its security boundaries were clearly demarcated, while the Middle East was up for grabs: so long as the Soviet Union stood ready to exploit every opening for its diplomatic and military penetrations, every local intrigue in Arab politics really did matter, because Soviet warships could always show up in the aftermath if the wrong side came out on top. Equally, until Gorbachev called it quits in one of his very first initiatives (he told the visiting Assad to sod off), the Soviet Union's deep involvement gave global significance to every episode in the Arab-Israeli confrontation.

All that is no more than a receding memory, now that geoeconomics is turning geopolitics and all warfare into a provincial phenomenon and the Middle East into a noisy backwater. But Bush's mind is clearly hardwired on a geopolitical program. Just as he continues to treat China as more important than Japan, and Russia as an altogether greater power than Germany, he remains obsessed with village-level Middle East affairs. There is oil, of course, and Bush duly talked a great deal about it in the buildup to the Iraq war. Yet he never even asked to see an estimate of the costs and benefits of $100 per barrel oil for the United States, which would quickly become 90 percent self-sufficient at that price, unlike its chief trading competitors. Actually his oil talk and Secretary of State James Baker's gaffe about "jobs" were the exact equivalents of the vapid references to markets and raw materials that were de rigueur each time diplomats and soldiers set out to waste blood and gold to conquer more useless desert, jungle, or tundra during the colonial era. The truth is that Bush is a quintessential product of America's post-1941 geopolitical era, and his obsession with the Middle East would probably remain embedded in his brain cells even if Iraq became a model democracy, Honda unveiled water-powered cars, and eternal peace was proclaimed from Marrakesh to Bangladesh.

A second explanation derives from an extreme tendency to personalize every issue, and to rely on personal contacts in conducting foreign policy. After devoting much time to its affairs before the invasion, Bush completely lost interest in Panama the moment Noriega was captured. It was ostensibly to thwart drug trafficking that the United States intervened with such devastating results, but now that more drugs transit Panama than ever before (Noriega's extortion amounted to a tariff barrier), Bush remains indifferent to its travails, just as he would not lift a finger to secure reconstruction aid from Congress after the invasion. Evidently for him, it was purely a Bush-Noriega fight, with U.S. troops and Panamanian civilians in the role of involuntary extras, and drugs a mere excuse.

Likewise, Bush could not refrain from personalizing to an extreme degree the confrontation with Iraq. Aside

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from the little matter of his undignified personal attacks on Saddam Hussein (*Sad*-am, in his peculiar rendition), there was the very large matter of Bush's evident willingness to offer a favorable peace to an otherwise quite unreformed Iraqi regime—if Saddam himself was removed from the scene. He publicly promised his support for Iraq's military chiefs if they would only give him his personal victory by getting rid of Saddam, ignoring their personal responsibility for the postwar massacre of Kurds and Shiites, to mention only their most recent crimes. As it happened, he may have miscalculated: President Hussein may yet have the opportunity to send a farewell message to ex-President Bush.

Altogether more damaging was Bush's personalism in dealing with the former Soviet Union. His persistence in channeling all policy into his personal dealings with Gorbachev was the key factor in sustaining the latter's prestige, thus propping up the entire Party regime whose destruction was always the prerequisite of true political reform and demilitarization. The democrats of Russia and all the other republics owe no thanks to George Bush. If it were up to him, Gorbachev would still be in the Kremlin, still sabotaging his own economic reforms, still defending the Party and its KGB cohorts.

Given these proclivities, the Middle East is ideal territory for Bush. For all practical purposes, there is no politics in Syria, only Assad's will, just as Hassan is everything that really matters in Morocco, Hussein is Jordan, Mubarak is Egypt, and King Fahd is assuredly Saudi Arabia. Only in Israel is there the unfortunate contretemps of a parliamentary democracy, which means that Shamir is merely the needle of the Knesset's interparty balance, hardly more significant in himself than Peres, Modai, Rabin, Sharon, or a whole host of lesser figures. But elsewhere in the Middle East, Bush can personalize all politics to his heart's content, and freely indulge in his passion for personal diplomacy.

Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney has said that it was not his trip to Riyadh with satellite photos of the Iraqi troop buildup that secured Saudi consent to be defended by American troops in August 1990, but rather the "personal relationship" between George Herbert Walker Bush and Fahd bin 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud. That indeed is a very personal relationship. Fahd apparently spends most days playing cards for hours on end, but when then Vice President Bush was visiting Saudi Arabia in 1986, the two of them were closeted together from an early dinner till 4 a.m.—one wonders what on earth Bush found to discuss with a man whose knowledge of world politics is such that during the 1988 elections he seriously embarrassed the U.S. ambassador by demanding to be allowed to cast a vote for Bush. (Even that degree of intimacy pales next to the scene off 'Aqaba, when the then vice president rubbed suntan lotion on King Hussein as the two of them were boating in the Red Sea.)

With all real power in the hands of royal or non-royal dictators who treat their countries as personal property, the patented Bush method of telephone diplomacy obviously works especially well in the Middle East. One phone call to Mubarak, and Egypt joins the anti-Iraq coalition, thereby condemning some 2 million Egyptian migrants living in Iraq to immediate dispossession and deportation, and death in some cases. Two phone calls, and Assad repudiates thirty years of noisy pan-Arabism to join as well. Three phone calls, and King Hussein at least promises to stop Iraqi imports through his territory, in spite of the importance of the trade for Jordan's fractured economy. No wonder that Bush prefers to deal with Arab leaders rather than with the prime ministers of Japan or Germany or any other land ravaged by parliamentary rule. In the Middle East, by contrast, only the Israelis are uncooperative: Bush's very rare calls to Shamir only elicit tiresome excuses about having to consult the Cabinet and the Knesset, a very poor match for Mubarak's courageous decisiveness and Assad's remarkable ability to turn Syrian policy on a dime.

Finally there is the Texas-oil factor. Bush was by no means outstanding as an oilman in his younger days, and his Zapata petroleum was never more than the smallest fry, but he was an oilman long enough to be formed by the experience. In the worldview of the oil patch, where good money is spent to drill twenty-barrel-a-day "stripper" wells, the Middle East with its abundance of 10,000-barrel-a-day wells is El Dorado, the ultimate golden land, the true center of the world. As for Saudi Arabia, it is the only true superpower, for ever since the rise and fall of OPEC it has been the volume of Aramco's tanker loadings that determines the worldwide oil price, and therefore the income of George Bush's best friends. When Saudi Arabia reduces loadings, they can pay for bare necessities of life as they see them, from pink executive jets for their wives to exotic trips to hunt endangered species. When Saudi output increases, their incomes immediately decline, which can force them to cut even their Bush campaign contributions.

George Bush is a man of deep-seated loyalties, to the Navy, Yale, and not least his Texas oil friends. No wonder that as vice president he secretly pleaded with the Saudis for higher oil prices (word leaked out, but he survived the scandal), and no wonder that he is now much agonized by the necessity to have them keep oil prices low, to prevent inflation in an election year. There is much of Connecticut, Maine, and above all Washington in Bush, but he is very Texan in his conviction that the Middle East is all important, and Saudi Arabia worthy of much more attention than Japan. We may all be thankful for Bush's obsession insofar as it ultimately served to interrupt Iraq's military and nuclear buildup. But otherwise having a full-time Middle East expert in the Oval Office left us with a part-time president, distorting the entire balance of U.S. foreign policy, not to speak of the neglect of domestic policy. Perhaps this year's lucky winner should set matters straight by appointing Bush U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

EDWARD LUTTWAK is writing a book on the Third Worldization of America.

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What foreign policy? III

YUGOBLUNDER

By Patrick Glynn

For months after Secretary of State James Baker's fateful visit to Belgrade in June 1991, observers debated whether the American secretary had inadvertently contributed to civil war in Yugoslavia by throwing his weight behind Yugoslavian "unity" at the very moment when the republics of Slovenia and Croatia were preparing to secede. Since then the mischievous consequences of U.S. policy toward Yugoslavia have so multiplied that the fuss over Baker's trip seems dwarfed by other disasters. In December Germany publicly broke with the United States, announcing recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. In January the EC followed. What began as a gruesome civil war has expanded into a crisis in U.S.-European relations, with major implications for the post-cold war balance of power. At last count thirty-nine nations—including Canada—have recognized the republics. The United States, still resisting recognition, remains isolated, its relations with Germany damaged, its influence and prestige in Europe clearly diminished.

U.S. policy-makers were quick to blame the Germans. In early January *The New York Times* described State officials "below the level of James A. Baker 3rd"—widely assumed to be Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, the State Department's lead man on U.S. policy toward Yugoslavia—as beginning to "wince" at German assertiveness. But the effect of such self-exculpating statements was only to aggravate an already bad situation, increasing rancor with Bonn, hastening the loss of American influence in Europe.

What went wrong? U.S. handling of the Yugoslav crisis is in fact a case study in how not to conduct foreign policy in the post-cold war world, combining lack of intellectual rigor and carelessness with what Senator Al Gore has termed "moral obtuseness" about the conflicts and issues at stake. It epitomizes the essential superficiality of the administration's approach to foreign affairs.

Even now administration officials remain unrepentant. When I requested interviews for this story at the office of Eagleburger aide Kenneth Juster, public affairs director Joseph Snyder, to whom I was referred, told me after two days that State officials at the "highest levels," including Eagleburger's office, had determined that "nobody in the building" would talk on the subject. The reason given was the "murky" situation, in which officials' comments would be "overtaken by events." (The likelier explanation was an article critical of U.S. policy on Yugoslavia that I had written the previous week for *The Washington Post.*)

The main factor in the Bush administration's mishandling of Yugoslavia was its devotion to geopolitical "stability" at the expense of democratic values and human rights. U.S. policy toward Yugoslavia paralleled and was subordinated to U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. In both cases the administration sought to prop up a declining Communist central government at the expense of democratically minded republics. In the USSR it was Gorbachev; in Yugoslavia it was the reform-minded Prime Minister Ante Markovic. In both cases the effort failed. But while in the Soviet instance it failed peacefully, in Yugoslavia U.S. policy may have contributed to a violent civil war. The errors were reinforced by clientism on the part of State's Belgrade-orientated Yugoslav hands—and possibly, in Eagleburger's case, by a history of personal financial dealings with firms owned by Yugoslavia's Communist government. (See "Lawrence of Serbia," page 16.)

What was occurring during 1989 and 1990 in Yugoslavia was an uneven shift to democracy. In the spring of 1990 both Slovenia and Croatia elected non-Communist governments in internationally monitored free elections. Both adopted democratic constitutions. Slovenia, the most prosperous and ethnically homogeneous of the six Yugoslav republics, was also the most eager for independence. The Croatian situation was more complex, given the presence of a 12 percent Serb population and memories of brutal mass murders of Serbs and other minorities under a fascist puppet regime during World War II.

But if Croatia's human rights situation was problematic, human rights problems in Serbia were clear-cut and acute. Since 1987 Serbia had been ruled by a hard-line Communist, Slobodan Milosevic, who increasingly based his appeal on fiercely nationalist themes. Under Milosevic, Serbia had perpetrated extreme abuses in the dominantly Albanian province of Kosovo—shooting and jailing protesters, torturing prisoners, firing ethnic Albanians from jobs and invading their homes. Moreover, in sharp contrast to elections in Slovenia and Croatia, Serbia's December 1990 elections were neither free nor fair. Restrictions on freedom of expression, unmonitored army voting, and a scheme whereby Serbian banks were ordered to print almost $2 billion in Yugoslav currency to be distributed to employees of state-owned enterprises prior to the election helped ensure victory for Milosevic and his nationalist neo-Communists.

By 1990 communism in Yugoslavia was ceding to nationalism, but in uneven fashion. In Slovenia and Croatia, nationalism had assumed an imperfect democratic tinge, while in Serbia it remained married to hard-line Leninism. The State Department's crucial failure was to miss the importance of this distinction. Even as Slovenia and Croatia edged toward democracy and the Serbian human rights record worsened, the United States strove to maintain an artificially evenhanded pol-

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icy. "We have never been admirers of Communist ideology," U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren Zimmermann told the Serbian newspaper *Borba* in March 1991. "However, we think that every people, the Yugoslav people included, have a right to the system they choose themselves and to the people they elect. We respect that right, and if they choose communism and the Communists, we are prepared to deal with their leadership."

Back home in Washington, State officials resisted efforts by legislators to change policy. Human rights problems in Yugoslavia, a senior congressional aide was told by high level State Department officials, "are the results of ethnic tensions.... Don't make a big deal about them. The Serbs are trying to hold the country together.... Don't break up [Yugoslavia] because the Soviet Union will use it as a model. If the Soviet Union breaks up, [the consequences] could be nuclear."

In part, however, policy was also dictated by a flawed conception of how violence in Yugoslavia might originate. Eagleburger warned legislators of deep historical ethnic hatreds in Yugoslavia, arguing that unity was the key to ethnic peace. What he and others failed to see was the difference between democratic and undemocratic nationalism. When violence arose in Yugoslavia, it would come not from the newly democratic republics but rather from the republic—Serbia—where Communist authoritarian forces held sway. The key issue was not ethnic tension but the willingness to employ violent methods.

Eagleburger's approach is best seen as part of the Bush administration's broad return to Kissingerian ideas of stability, where stability—in contrast to Reagan's approach—would be given clear priority over human rights. (Eagleburger was a former Kissinger aide.) Throughout 1990 and 1991 Eagleburger consistently opposed measures that might undercut Yugoslavian unity—or penalize the Serbian republic. Following a high-level congressional trip to Yugoslavia in August 1990, in which visiting senators, headed by Republican leader Bob Dole, were shocked to witness firsthand a crackdown by Serbian police on ethnic Albanians, Senator Don Nickles introduced legislation designed to redirect U.S. aid away from the Yugoslav central government, which had no power to curb Serbian abuses, and toward individual republics, based on criteria of free elections and human rights. State resisted, pleading for Yugoslav unity, and found an ally in Representative Helen Bentley, of Serbian parentage and a tireless defender of Serbian interests. Bentley joined in the House-Senate negotiations on the Nickles amendment, even though she did not belong to the relevant committee. "She camped out in the committee room reading a book called *The Rape of Serbia*," a congressional aide recalls. Nickles and Bentley were able to strike a compromise—a provision for six-month delay—that permitted the amendment to pass. Bentley was the only individual I interviewed who expressed complete satisfaction with U.S. policy. Even Representative Jim

Lawrence of Serbia

According to statements entered into the congressional record by House Banking Committee chairman Henry Gonzalez, Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger played a role in setting up two major Yugoslav-owned companies in the United States during the 1980s: LBS Bank, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Yugoslav bank Ljubljanska Banka, and Global Motors/Yugo of America, a subsidiary of the Yugoslav arms maker Zavodi Crvena Zastava, and importer of the Yugo automobile. According to his financial disclosure report filed under law in February 1989, Eagleburger (who was ambassador to Yugoslavia from 1977 to 1981) was paid $5,000 as a director of LBS bank from January 1, 1988, through February 24, 1989, and his directorship of Global Motors was uncompensated. But Global Motors was also a client of two consulting firms for which Eagleburger worked, Kissinger and Associates and Kent Associates, from which he received salary, bonuses, and severance totaling over $1.1 million for the same period. In the case of Kent Associates, Global Motors was one of only four clients listed by Eagleburger apparently accounting together for the $453,872 he received.

In 1988 LBS and its chairman were indicted for money-laundering. Although the chairman was cleared of charges, the bank was convicted, Gonzalez said. Global Motors went bankrupt, and Eagleburger was named as a defendant in a suit stemming from the bankruptcy, according to Gonzalez.

Two questions arise. Could business connections have made Eagleburger inclined to give a more sympathetic hearing to Serbs? (Judy Dempsey of *The Financial Times* has written, for example, that Serbian leader Milosevic "cultivated a friendship" with Eagleburger while serving as a director of the main state-owned Yugoslav bank Beobanka.) Also, could Eagleburger be said in some sense to have had a financial interest in the survival of Yugoslavia in that more such business deals with Yugoslav government-owned firms might be in prospect once he left government? (When these questions were outlined to Eagleburger's office and a request for an interview was made, he chose not to return the phone call.) At the very least, Eagleburger's situation as key policy-maker on Yugoslavia reveals an important loophole in the present ethics laws. Ethics regulations apply only to dealings with firms, not (as in the Yugoslavian case) to governments that may own those firms. In March 1989 Eagleburger pledged to recuse himself from matters involving LBS bank and Global Motors and their parent firms for as long as litigation was pending. He did not explicitly recuse himself from matters relating to Yugoslavia. Interestingly, Lord Carrington, the man chosen to chair the EC Peace Conference on Yugoslavia, also once worked at Kissinger Associates. Under Carrington's chairmanship, the EC pursued similarly even-handed policies vis-à-vis the Yugoslav republics.

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Moody, who also has strong Serbian sympathies, regretted that the United States hadn't played a more active role as a broker between the parties.

In theory, the Nickles amendment provided a new policy framework, anchored more closely to democracy and human rights. Human rights groups such as Helsinki Watch had urged just such an approach. The point was not just to penalize Serbia, which was committing the grossest abuses, but to increase leverage with Croatia, where the human rights picture was still unclear. Croatia's 1990 elections had been highly nationalistic in tone. Traveling in dominantly Serb regions of Croatia in 1990, Helsinki Watch executive director Jeri Laber says she found "genuine fear" among Serbs of a possible resurgence of World War II persecution and genocide. Laber and others point out that Milosevic deliberately stirred and manipulated such fears—some argue in preparation for a coming war. Moreover, Croatia's President Franjo Tudjman attempted (somewhat unsuccessfully) to respond to Serb complaints in what the U.S. consul in Zagreb described in an August 1990 cable as "sound and judicious" fashion. Tudjman offered the head of the minority Serbian Democratic Party the vice presidency but was turned down. Eager for an international presence and receptive to human rights monitoring, Croatia has shown a willingness to meet EC demands. Many now agree a more visible U.S. presence in Croatia and Serbia, backed by the threat of sanctions, might have done much both to reassure Serbs in Croatia and to deter the Serbian republic from violent intervention.

In May 1991 the Nickles sanctions were imposed, and aid was cut to the Yugoslav central government and Serbia. However, a mere twenty days later President Bush waived the sanctions after a phone call with Markovic, the Yugoslav "Gorbachev." But by now Markovic's authority had been completely undercut by Milosevic, whose December money-printing scandal had destroyed the convertibility of the dinar and with it the Markovic economic reforms. Moreover, nine days earlier Serbia had blocked the scheduled assumption of Yugoslav's collective presidency by Stipe Mesic, a Croat, destroying any pretense of a neutral federation.

During the winter of 1990-91, State continued to resist measures to treat the republics differently or to link U.S. aid to human rights. In January 1991 Dole introduced legislation calling for aid to republics in both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, based on democratic and human rights criteria. State opposed the measure. Throughout 1991—as militant Serbs in Croatia, stirred by Milosevic, mounted armed rebellion, eventually declaring a small independent state—Serbia resisted efforts by Slovenia and Croatia to negotiate a looser Yugoslav confederation. State advocated standing aside. In May Croatians voted overwhelmingly for independence in a referendum, following a similar vote by the Slovenes. In June Baker traveled to Belgrade and gave his speech emphasizing U.S. interest in the "territorial integrity" of Yugoslavia. "I believe [Baker's speech] suggested to the Serbs—to Milosevic—that we were going to support extreme things to keep the country together," says Yugoslav expert Steven Burg of Brandeis University. Even after the declarations of independence by Slovenia and Croatia, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater condemned "unilateral actions that pre-empt dialogue," arguing that "separation will lead to violence," implicitly blaming Slovenia and Croatia for the war that Serbia and the Yugoslav army were about to start.

As late as October 1991, with war raging and thousands of Croatian civilians fleeing their homes, State testified against legislation introduced by Senator Alfonse D'Amato (another veteran of the Dole trip to Kosovo) calling for a cutoff of aid to and sanctions against Serbia.

From the beginning of the war, Germany and Austria leaned toward recognition of Croatia and Slovenia as the best solution. The United States, following U.N. special envoy Cyrus Vance, argued rather that recognition would only escalate the war. As late as mid-December Eagleburger told the mayors of the besieged Croatian towns of Dubrovnik and Osijek that recognition would only lead to expansion of the war into Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia.

Instead, the German decision to recognize the two republics, coming in December and January, brought the first enduring cease-fire. With Yugoslav army desertions growing, the Serbian economy flagging, and the war increasingly unpopular at home, Serbia's Milosevic now appeared ready to talk. As is not uncommon in dealing with a dictator, pressure had worked. The situation was far from resolved, but for the first time in fifteen cease-fires, the Croatian countryside was mostly quiet. One only wonders now what a differential policy pursued earlier in the game might have done. "If we had summoned the moral courage to act," says Gore, "we could have saved thousands of lives."

In the end the Yugoslav crisis did more than create two new states: it marked the re-emergence of Germany as a great power. It was an ironic reversal of roles. Throughout the 1980s, when the United States pursued tough tactics against Communist leaders, based on a commitment to democratic principles, West Germany steered a more neutral middle path between East and West based on realpolitik. Now the Germans were acting from principle against a dictator while the United States cultivated realpolitik. It was a measure of the fundamental difference between the Bush and the Reagan foreign policies. It was also a measure of the declining power of the United States. One of the great lessons of the 1980s was that those countries fared best in the global power struggle that stood firmly for their principles. In the 1990s, returning to Kissingerian ideas of stability, the United States eschewed such a course. The result was not merely a botched opportunity and an unnecessary loss of lives, but an absolute loss of international power for the United States.

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STATECRAFT AND SCOWCROFT

By John B. Judis

Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, the assistant to the president for national security affairs, is one of the most respected members of the Bush administration, and for good reason. The unflappable, intelligent, loyal Scowcroft has succeeded where almost every other recent national security adviser has failed: he has managed both to be a highly influential adviser to the president and to coordinate effectively the debate among the president's top foreign policy officials. Scowcroft has been able to combine these two functions because he lacks the insatiable drive toward power and fame that has crippled previous National Security Council heads. In a town corrupted by the compulsive pursuit of celebrity, Scowcroft is the rare and stunning exception.

But in addition to winning praise as a manager, Scowcroft has also been heralded as a foreign policy genius. *The Economist* described the Gulf war as "Mr. Scowcroft's finest hour." *Time* credited him as a man of "historical imagination," and "the main architect of Bush's foreign policy," who had achieved a "triumph" in arms control. These hosannas may not be equally deserved. Scowcroft has turned out to be an adviser more important than Secretary of State James Baker, but his advice hasn't always led to triumphs. Although he has had some successes—most notably, dislodging Saddam from Kuwait—Scowcroft has also inspired or seconded some of the administration's most dubious calls.

It was Scowcroft who, at the beginning of the Bush administration, lobbied strenuously for postponing the START negotiations that Ronald Reagan and George Shultz had virtually concluded. It then took three years for the administration to initial the same pact. In June 1989 Scowcroft reinforced Bush's determination not to allow the massacre at Tiananmen Square to disturb America's relations with China's brutal gerontocracy. In the Gulf war, Scowcroft can take credit for insisting that the United States force Saddam out of Kuwait, but he also took the lead in arguing that the American military not intervene after Saddam began slaughtering the Kurds and Shiites that the administration had incited to revolt. And it was Scowcroft who went from unwarranted skepticism about Gorbachev to unwarranted support for his continued rule. Scowcroft shouldn't be pilloried for these positions, but he also doesn't deserve to be eulogized for his historical imagination.

Scowcroft's success as well as his failure as a foreign policy adviser stems from the same source—his application to the post-cold war world of a foreign policy doctrine that he first learned in college and then thoroughly absorbed while serving under Henry Kissinger in the Nixon and Ford administrations. Scowcroft, like Kissinger, is a proponent of realism, a doctrine with antecedents in George Washington's Farewell Address and in nineteenth-century European balance of power politics that was championed in the 1940s by Walter Lippmann, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Hans Morgenthau, and later by Kissinger and George Kennan. According to foreign policy realists, America's goal should not be to impose its ideals of government upon other nations, but rather to secure peace and stability through maintaining a balance of power among potential adversaries. Realists see conflicts among nations as endemic and the pursuit of world government as futile. Some liberal realists like Lippmann have argued that by encouraging democratic reform (where feasible) the United States can contribute to international stability, while conservative realists like Kennan and Kissinger have discounted the importance of democracy and domestic reform.

In the hands of Nixon and Kissinger, realism—epitomized in the opening to China—proved a useful corrective to the fog with which evangelical anti-communism had shrouded American foreign policy. But two decades later, in Scowcroft's hands, this conservative realism—its vision riveted on the external relations among nations—has proved far less useful in comprehending a world in revolutionary upheaval. If conservative realism illuminated the world of the early 1970s, it has obscured the world of the 1990s, causing Scowcroft's and the administration's understanding of international events to lag behind reality.

Scowcroft is a quiet, deliberate man. His caution in foreign policy is inscribed in his character. As he talks, he presses his fingertips together lightly, evaluating his own words carefully before he utters them. He has the gaunt demeanor of a church elder, but he is surprisingly congenial, as a loyal staff testifies. He was born in 1925, the son of a prosperous wholesale grocer in Ogden, Utah, graduated from West Point in 1947, and might have had a career as an Air Force pilot except that the next year he broke his back in an air crash into the New Hampshire woods. Instead, Scowcroft became one of a first genera-

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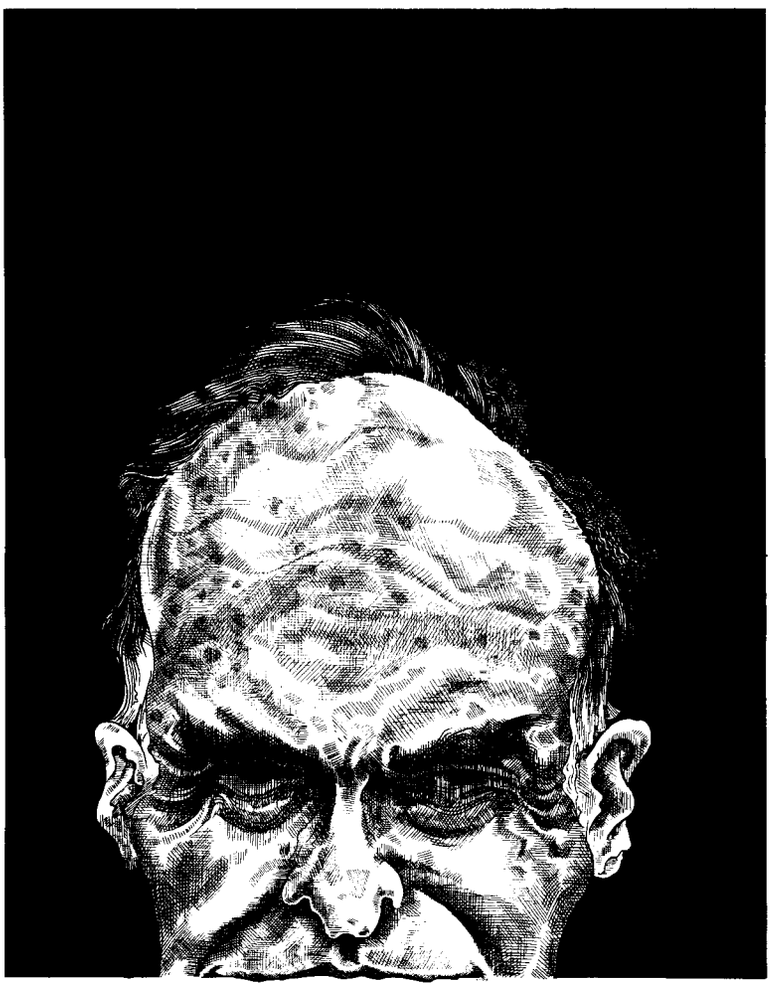
tion of cold war defense intellectuals who understood the conflict with the Soviet Union on its own terms rather than as an extrapolation of the war against Hitler. He received an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Columbia University in political science and was trained in Russian and Serbo-Croatian at Georgetown.

Scowcroft acknowledges his own debt to the proponents of realism. When he entered graduate school, he told me in an interview in his West Wing office, he was "a student of the Morgenthau school of realism." He claims to have tempered his initial enthusiasm for Morgenthau, though his 1967 Ph.D. thesis on congressional attitudes toward Yugoslavia and Spain exemplified the realistic outlook. In it Scowcroft was critical of Congress's attempt to prevent the Truman and Eisenhower administrations from drawing Communist Yugoslavia into an anti-Soviet alliance. Congress's actions, he argued, were "based on ideology rather than on logic."



BRENT SCOWCROFT BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Scowcroft first joined the Nixon administration in 1971 as the president's military aide, doing the advance work and accompanying Nixon on his visits to China in 1971 and the Soviet Union in 1972. Kissinger, impressed by Scowcroft's reliability and his willingness to stand up to Nixon aide H. R. Haldeman, tapped him to become his deputy at the National Security Council. In 1975, when Kissinger decided that he should not be NSC adviser as well as secretary of state, he convinced Ford to promote Scowcroft to succeed him. Although Scowcroft did not admire Kissinger's bullying managerial style, he was profoundly influenced by Kissinger's view of the world and of diplomacy. "What I learned from him," Scowcroft says, "is what it is like to have a really strategic mind."

Even after leaving office, Scowcroft continued to serve under Kissinger, first as a consultant and then as the vice chairman of Kissinger Associates, the international consulting firm that the former secretary of state set up in 1982. He co-authored articles with Kissinger and read over the drafts of Kissinger's articles and columns before they were published. Although the two men sometimes disagreed on specifics—Scowcroft was more openly critical of the Strategic Defense Initiative than Kissinger—they operated as a team, with Kissinger still as captain. In 1984 Scowcroft co-signed an acerbic Kissinger column in *The Wall Street Journal* defending the Kissinger-Nixon foreign policy record against both liberal and conservative critics. In March 1987, when Reagan administration arms control negotiator Paul Nitze wrote a *Washington Post* column rebutting Kissinger's criticisms of the administration's INF and START negotiating stances, Scowcroft leapt to Kissinger's defense in a column of his own.

In the early 1980s Scowcroft and Kissinger's realism provided a welcome respite to the Reagan administration's apocalyptic anti-communism. In their writings, the two supported the embattled faction within the administration that continued to favor constructive negotiation with the Soviet Union. Scowcroft served admirably as the chairman of a commission Reagan appointed to settle the fate of the MX missile. Scowcroft's report urged that the United States negotiate with the Soviet Union to secure "strategic stability" and that it shift its ballistic missile arsenal away from the MX toward a single-warhead and less provocative Midgetman.

But Scowcroft, like Kissinger, was completely thrown off balance by Gorbachev's overtures to the United States and his reform efforts at home. While the arch ideologue Reagan—to his immense credit—understood as early as 1986 that Gorbachev's emergence represented an opportunity to transform U.S.-Soviet relations, Scowcroft the realist continued through 1989 to regard Gorbachev as a "cynical manipulator" who was trying to lure the United States into disadvantageous arms agreements that would drive a wedge between America and Europe. In a 1988 report for the Atlantic Council, Scowcroft held out the possibility that Soviet economic reform was really intended to make the Soviets "a more dangerous competitor in military as well as other spheres." He de-

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nounced Reagan's efforts at Reykjavik to reach an agreement banning ballistic missiles and even frowned upon the START proposals to reduce American and Soviet ballistic missile forces by 50 percent. And he joined Kissinger in attacking the INF treaty, charging that it decoupled the United States from Western Europe. In an era of continual conflict and tension, their objections might have made sense; but Reagan and Shultz correctly saw these treaties as steps toward ending the cold war itself.

Scowcroft failed to understand the promise of Gorbachev because by then his realism had become a conservative dogma. The weakness of idealism—from Wilson through Reagan—has been that it vests unrealizable hopes in achieving internal changes in other nations. But the weakness of conservative realism has been to ignore such changes when they occur—either for the better or the worse—and to disregard their potential for transforming relations between nations. Scowcroft remained fixated on a bygone balance of power. He was unwilling to adapt his realism to the new reality of an emerging post-cold war world. In the Bush administration, Scowcroft championed this conservative realism. It shaped his view on arms control, the Soviet Union, China, and the war with Iraq. Although it sometimes saved the country from precipitous action, it just as often left the administration ill-equipped to lead internationally.

Scowcroft devised the administration's initial strategy toward the Soviet Union. One senior White House official says he "was more intimately familiar with these issues than anyone else in the administration and had an idea of where we ought to go." Immediately after taking office, Scowcroft sought to dampen what he described critically as the "euphoria" over Gorbachev and arms control that Reagan and Shultz had created. Speaking for the administration, Scowcroft expressed his skepticism about Gorbachev's unilateral reductions in conventional arms. "The cold war is not over," Scowcroft declared in a January 1989 television interview.

His most important initiative was to postpone consideration of the START treaty. Scowcroft convinced Bush to undertake a "strategic review," the same ploy that Nixon had used in 1969 to cool the Johnson administration's negotiations with the Soviets, and to give negotiations on conventional arms priority over START. Scowcroft argued that if the United States were to cut its ballistic force in half without first reducing the Soviet conventional threat, it would reduce its power to deter a Soviet conventional attack in Western Europe. Scowcroft's reasoning would have been questionable even in the heyday of arms control hair-splitting, but it made no sense whatever in 1989. Under START's terms, the United States retained 9,000 long-range nuclear weapons—enough to obliterate many Soviet Unions—and gained a strategic advantage over the enemy.

The United States could have signed both the strategic and conventional arms control treaties by the end of 1990, if not earlier, and could have been embarked on START II or III by the time the Soviet Union dissolved. Instead, the treaty has yet to be ratified, and the United States must worry about thousands of warheads falling into the hands of newly independent governments at odds with Boris Yeltsin's Russia. Last fall, even as terms like "parity" and "counterforce" were losing all meaning, Scowcroft continued to campaign for the Midgetman missile—a $25 billion toy the United States can ill afford and whose deployment would have no effect now on U.S.-Russian relations or on American security. Scowcroft couldn't abandon the Midgetman because he couldn't abandon the intellectual edifice that originally sustained it.

After Tiananmen Square, Scowcroft also played an important role in reinforcing Bush's own convictions about how to deal with China. Scowcroft argued that the United States faced the same situation in 1989 that it had faced in 1971 when it initiated talks with China while the Cultural Revolution was still raging. Now as then, Scowcroft argued, the United States should base its diplomacy on the two nations' mutual interests and not on the Chinese leaders' internal practices. Scowcroft and Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger (another Kissinger Associates alumnus) even traveled secretly to China twice later that year to assure the Chinese leaders that the United States was not serious about the ban on high-level diplomacy that Bush had announced after the massacre.

Scowcroft's conservative realism once again led him to mistake the present for the past. 1989 was not 1971. With the Soviet Union edging toward collapse, the United States no longer needed Chinese support against it. And where the administration needed Chinese support—stopping arms sales to unstable Third World regimes—it could not get it before or after Tiananmen Square. The only thing the United States got out of its conciliatory attitude was China's grudging abstention in the Security Council debate over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. But the administration's acquiescence in the Beijing massacre may have contributed to Saddam Hussein's conviction that he could get away with murder in Kuwait.

Scowcroft rightfully resisted some of the draconian measures that the administration's critics proposed it take against China. Cutting off most-favored-nation trading status, for instance, would have been tantamount to cutting off economic relations between the two countries. But Scowcroft and the administration took conservative realism to an extreme, refusing to countenance any criticism of the Chinese regime. Acting on this perverse logic, the administration even vetoed a bill that would have granted asylum to Chinese students in the United States who faced punishment when they returned to China.

In August 1990, at the climactic NSC meeting on Iraq after the president had returned from Aspen, Scowcroft took the lead in advocating that the United States do whatever was necessary to drive Iraq out of Kuwait, and he is justly credited with steeling Bush's resolution to resist Saddam Hussein. Scowcroft is also credited for coining the term "new world order," although Gor-

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bachev used it in his December 1988 U.N. speech. At the time, Scowcroft's phrase was mistaken as a Wilsonian call for a new world government, but the national security adviser, a cynic about the U.N., was again speaking as a realist concerned about creating a new balance of power that would stymie international outlaws like Saddam. "Brent saw a new world order with a realist's emphasis on relations between states and on ground rules," says Richard Haas, Scowcroft's deputy for Near East and South Asian affairs.

Scowcroft played a prominent role in defining America's ultimate objectives in the war. He framed them in realistic terms, insisting the United States pursue Saddam's withdrawal from Kuwait, but not his overthrow in Iraq or the creation of democracy in Kuwait. "It was clearly a realist strategy," Scowcroft says. "You don't take on some of these great social experiment kinds of things that get you bogged down, that you cannot do successfully." Scowcroft's realism was entirely appropriate. If the United States had sought the overthrow of Saddam and the democratization of Kuwait, it could never have recruited Arab states to a multinational coalition. And replacing Saddam might have plunged the United States into the quagmire of a MacArthur-style occupation of Iraq. (After invading neighboring Panama, the United States hasn't been able to achieve its stated goals of creating democracy and ending the drug trade.) But just as in defining U.S. relations with China, Scowcroft took realism to the point where it obscured reality.

After the United States had driven Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the administration called a halt to the fighting, assuming that disillusioned Iraqi troops would participate in Saddam's overthrow. But when, instead, Iraqi troops turned on the Shiites and Kurds whom the United States had urged to rise against the Iraqi dictator, the United States still failed to act, paralyzed by its own decision not to go beyond ousting the Iraqis from Kuwait. To defend the rebels against extinction, U.S. forces did not need to take Baghdad; they needed primarily to neutralize Iraq's helicopter gunships and cut off Basra. Nitze blames Scowcroft for misadvising the president. "After it was clear Saddam Hussein's forces were not going to turn on him and that everybody was going to get killed, the president should have changed his decision. He was ill served by his national security adviser." Similarly in Kuwait, the United States did not need to demand the overthrow of the emir, merely the liberalization of the Kuwaiti regime, but the United States confined itself to restoring the status quo antebellum. The administration again ignored objectives that were consistent with the pursuit of regional stability and with a more liberal understanding of realism.

After securing the postponement of START, Scowcroft continued to take the lead in arms control and U.S.-Soviet relations, but by the end of 1989 he had dramatically altered his view of Mikhail Gorbachev. When Gorbachev let Eastern Europe go, Scowcroft says, he realized that "he was not simply a cynical manipulator." Scowcroft finally saw what Reagan the idealist had understood two years earlier, that Gorbachev wanted to end the cold war, but failed to grasp even newer realities. Having spurned Gorbachev, he now embraced him as an instrument of stability and the U.S.-Soviet alliance as the basis of a new world order. But just as Scowcroft was embracing him, Gorbachev's own people were beginning to reject him. No longer the acclaimed leader, Gorbachev was now challenged not only by old-line Stalinists but also by democratic reformers such as Yeltsin and by independence movements in the Soviet republics. Yet Scowcroft refused to acknowledge that the regime and the country were disintegrating. Scowcroft snubbed Yeltsin and downplayed the independence movements, urging Bush to identify the United States with Gorbachev and the central government's survival.

Just as with China, Scowcroft's realism did prevent the United States from the errors of a woolly idealism. In early 1990 Scowcroft advised Bush to reject pleas from both liberals and conservatives that the United States grant official recognition to the Baltics. This was, in retrospect, a wise decision. If the United States had acted then, it might have inspired a powerful alliance between the center and the right against both the democratic reformers and advocates of independence. But Scowcroft's realism also drove the administration into errors. In August 1991, two weeks before the coup and three months before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Scowcroft played a major role in writing a speech that Bush gave in Ukraine vigorously supporting Gorbachev's plan for a federation and warning that the independence movements risked a "hopeless course of isolation." A week later Scowcroft, claiming that the speech was misinterpreted by angry Ukrainians, staunchly defended it in a *Washington Post* column, but the speech's thrust and rhetoric belied his protestations.

The administration's failure to anticipate the breakup of the Soviet Union—like its failure to take advantage of the completed START negotiations in 1989—probably did not do any lasting damage to America's position in the world. It was a case of missed opportunities rather than of fatal errors. But it was symptomatic of a deeper problem in foreign policy. Incapable of comprehending the present, the administration—whether in Moscow or Brussels, Beijing or Tokyo—has been unable to shape the future. While the world is being transformed by new political and strategic revolutions, the administration has been busily and skillfully fighting yesterday's battles.

Bush and not Scowcroft must shoulder the final blame for this. And Scowcroft's foibles as an adviser do not diminish his stature as a public servant. Nevertheless, the administration's failure to apprehend reality is largely the result of Bush having followed Scowcroft's lead in foreign policy. Scowcroft's conservative realism has straggled behind events. It hasn't been able to function in a revolutionary era when nations themselves are dissolving and when the old alliances and institutions of the cold war no longer have any relevance. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Predicaments

Some sexual subjects are problematic, not because of puritanism but because of audience incompetence. One of these is incest. After all the liberal bravery has been invoked—any subject is usable, incest is only a matter of cultural custom, and so on—the fact of audience bewilderment remains. What are we supposed to be feeling about the entwined incestuous pair? Understanding? Forbearance? Joy at the film's courage? Secret gratification of our own (alleged) secret incestuous desires? Many of us, I'd guess, don't know what such a film expects of us and are incompetent to deal with it.

Brother-sister incest is the subject of **Close My Eyes** (Castle Hill), a topic with a considerable history. For instance, Wagner's Siegmund and Sieglinde, brother and sister, beget a new heroic race; on the other hand, that was in a different age. When Mann satirized the Wagnerian idea in *The Blood of the Walsungs* with a twentieth-century pair, storms erupted. In *Brotherly Love* (1969), which has one of Peter O'Toole's best performances, the tone is tragic because the brother (O'Toole) is driven mad by a love that can never be consummated. Not the case in this new film.

Close My Eyes was written and directed by Stephen Poliakoff, a well-known British playwright—very well written, too, as far as the dialogue alone is concerned, and acutely directed. Poliakoff apparently wanted to create something of the tacit tension that Joseph Losey got in *The Servant* and *Accident*, and, helped by the subtle lighting of Witold Stok, he often succeeds.

But what are we to *do* with the story? A young architect, played by Clive Owen, and his sister, Saskia Reeves, were separated for much of their lives because their parents had divorced. Now they get to know and become fond of each other: after she is married—to Alan Rickman, a creamily successful businessman—the sibling pair suddenly explode into a wild sexual affair. Soon after, the sister tries to break it off; the brother is insistent and virtually forces her to continue. The husband suspects that his wife is having an affair and ultimately discovers that it's with her brother.

We know we are meant to be feeling something about all this, but it's difficult to decide what that something is. Another question occurs: How will it all end? Poliakoff doesn't do much better with this second question than with the first. At the finish, when all is revealed, the brother asks, "What's going to happen?" The husband says plaintively, "I haven't a clue," and the three of them wander off through a field along a stream. The film's lack of closure mirrors—too accurately—our own puzzlement. What was the film *for?*

Owen is earnest as the brother, but not very moving. Reeves, on the other hand, is a find. She was the sophisticated one in the recent *Antonia and Jane*, and here she is superb—feverishly passionate, bitterly witty, anguished through all her being. Reeves is one more of those talented and trained young women whom British theater-and-film keeps producing. Rickman, whom I last saw in *Truly, Madly, Deeply*, hasn't yet had the chance to display much variety, but his polished characters gleam. Here, just when we begin to think that, like other English actors before him, he is a bit overdependent on precise enunciation, he gives us a glimpse under the veneer. Poliakoff's best touch in the writing of this screenplay is this suave man's confusion and hurt as his customary finesse proves inadequate to the strange situation. Rickman stabs.

But Britain isn't alone in producing talented young women; they just seem to use them more sensibly over there. In the United States we have Rebecca de Mornay, for example. If her career were an entity in itself, assayable apart from the films she has been in, her gifts would have brought her much more recognition than she has had. Her range alone might have done it. In *Risky Business* she was a cool, high-powered call girl; in *The Trip to Bountiful* a demure young wife; in *Runaway Train* a scruffy, tough vagabond; in *And God Created Woman* a frisky sexual schemer; in *Feds* a gangbuster FBI agent; in *Dealers* a wily financier. (In the theater, where I've never seen her, she has played Billie Dawn in *Born Yesterday* and Charlotte Corday in *Marat/Sade.*)

Every one of her films has been more or less a clinker, yet in every one of them de Mornay has done something more than most actresses could have done.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Daughters of the Dust. *Julie Dash, writer and director, makes her impressive debut with this somewhat overly pretty account of a black family, 1902, migrating from the Sea Islands to the North. A genuine poetic talent underlies the easy poeticizing. (Reviewed 2/10/92)* **JFK.** *Oliver Stone's real rage is that the assassination extended the Vietnam War. Factually rickety, but—or despite—very powerful filmmaking. (1/27/92)* **Memoirs of a River.** *Rural Hungary, 1882. The last Hungarian trial of Jews for ritual murder. Judit Elek directs movingly, though compression would have helped. (2/10/92)* **35 Up.** *Michael Apted's latest cluster of interviews with subjects whom he has been filming every seven years since they were seven. As fascinating as ever and (inevitably) more poignant. (2/17/92)* **—SK**

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But we seem incapable of distinguishing between her films as such and her talent as such. Yeats asked, "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" implying that we couldn't; but in performance itself, don't we have some obligation to try? Else we help to deprive an exceptional actress—and ourselves—of the career she ought to have.

Now de Mornay makes it a bit harder for herself and us by appearing in a machine-made suspense thriller, **The Hand That Rocks the Cradle** (Buena Vista). Only devotees of good acting—some of whom exist, I hope—would want to see this contraption, in which de Mornay plays a maniacal young widow, rendered childless by a hysterectomy, who tries to wreak vengeance on a couple (with children) whom she holds responsible for her state. Through all the concoctings of the plot, de Mornay moves like a hot icicle. She has bothered to think what this character might actually *be*, other than an ingredient in a recipe for shock, and she brings this woman much closer to life than might have been thought possible—closer than, in an overall sense, the film deserves.

Actors need to work, and not just for money, so de Mornay takes the best that comes along in which she can achieve something on her own. Of course, actors often do this; but when, say, Jessica Tandy does it, we see it as an excursion from her true realm. De Mornay has no such realm as backdrop.

What she badly needs is the intervention of a perceptive filmmaker with a good project, who recognizes the abilities that have been spilled on inferior films. I don't assume that good screenplays are easily available: I assume the exact opposite. Look at the troubles that other good women, such as Anjelica Huston and Debra Winger, have had in finding material worthy of themselves. But at the very least de Mornay should be thought to be in the same quandary: a first-line talent in need of first-line work. •

Woodrow Wilson, George Bush, and the 'higher realism.'

Brave New World Orders

By Robert W. Tucker

I.

We are in a Woodrow Wilson season again, but this one promises to be very different from the last. Only a brief generation ago, at the time of Vietnam, Wilson appeared as a rather equivocal figure. The collapse of liberal internationalism inevitably affected the standing of the statesman who was considered to be its spiritual father. On the left a revisionist historiography arose in which Wilson was seen as the prime architect in this century of an expansionist strategy to create a liberal-capitalist world order. In this view, the strategy represented a losing cause—witness Vietnam—because American power was declining, and the global prospects of liberal capitalism were deemed meager.

At the time this estimate was partly shared by the right. Although there was little doubt among conservatives about American power (they doubted only the will to use the power), there was a pervasive doubt about the attraction that American ideals of freedom held for most of the world. Self-determination, the achievement of political independence, had not been followed by the triumph of free institutions. Only half of the Wilsonian promise had been realized; and the more important half appeared increasingly distant. Considering the prospects in those years for the expansion of liberty, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a Wilsonian, plaintively observed that "events increasingly persuade us to act as if Wilson were wrong."

The expectation of a long, dark night for liberal democracy, we now know, did not come to pass. Instead, the prospect soon beckoned of a world that was almost everywhere moving toward the fulfillment of Wilson's vision. Not only did the allegedly irrelevant institutions of liberalism and capitalism capture the imagination of peoples throughout the world, but Wilson's vision of collective security came, quite unexpectedly, to be championed by the leader of a party that had once looked upon it with disdain.

In George Bush's vision of a "new world order," we appear to have a replay of sorts of Woodrow Wilson's vision of a new world order. For both, the states of the world, great and small, are to be guaranteed the same right of respect for their sovereignty and their territorial integrity. For both, the peace of the world is to be maintained, and democratic societies are to be made safe against the threat of arbitrary power, by a universal system of collective security that substitutes a community of power for a balance of power. And for both, the United States is destined to play the role of leadership in the new order, a role that falls to this nation not only because of the magnitude of its power but also because it alone has "sufficient moral force" (Wilson) or "moral standing" (Bush) to lead the other nations of the world.

Moreover, the circumstances attending the present vision appear far more favorable than those that marked the past vision. It is not only that democratic ideals have triumphed today to a degree far beyond an earlier period; equally important, the position of American leadership that Wilson's vision of world order assumed (but did not really possess) has also been realized. Given this nation's dominance in the world in the wake of the disappearance of Soviet power, a conception of international order with which this century has dealt harshly was revived in the

Woodrow Wilson
by August Heckscher
(Scribner's, 743 pp., $35)

Woodrow Wilson: A Life for World Peace
by J. W. Schulte Nordholt
(University of California Press, 495 pp., $34.95)

The Papers of Woodrow Wilson
Vol. 62, July 26–September 3, 1919
Vol. 63, September 4–November 5, 1919
Vol. 64, November 6, 1919–February 27, 1920
edited by Arthur S. Link
(Princeton University Press, 662 pp., 668 pp., and 553 pp., respectively, $57.50 each)

Robert W. Tucker is the author, with David C. Hendrickson, of *The Imperial Temptation: The New World Order and Ameica's Purpose*, forthcoming from the Council on Foreign Relations.

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Gulf war, though in an entirely unexpected manner.

It was revived by the war not because a true community of power suddenly materialized where none had existed before, but because a hegemonic power emerged where before there had been a balance of power. The "new world order" proclaimed by Bush was not an order of collective security, in the sense that champions of that system have always imagined. Even so, were it to persist and to develop, it would be an order that might achieve the purposes that collective security is designed to achieve. That it would do so by means that Wilson shrank from accepting would not detract from its success. A half century of hot war and cold war has largely emancipated the nation from a reluctance to pursue Wilsonian ends by un-Wilsonian means. The Gulf war provided a striking demonstration of how far that emancipation has gone.

II.

The world at the end of the twentieth century appears to have caught up with Woodrow Wilson. Seventy some years ago it seemed to have left him behind. This, at least, was once the prevailing view of historians. John Morton Blum expressed it in the 1950s, when he wrote that "Wilson's was a nineteenth-century intelligence, obsolescing at a rapid rate." The world of the Great War had moved beyond the familiar and optimistic world of the nineteenth century, but Wilson had not. He had clung instead to the regnant liberal beliefs in man's essential reasonableness; in the power of public opinion; in the inevitability of progress as mediated through the working of liberal political and economic institutions. These beliefs had been challenged and very nearly discredited by the war. And what the war did not put in doubt, the postwar years did. Wilson's world had vanished, never to be regained. Yet in the last decade of the twentieth century that world appears to have been resurrected. History, the conviction increasingly grows today, is going to resume the course it was pursuing before 1914. A past that was once widely believed to have been lost forever has suddenly become the future.

It can occasion little surprise, then, that a Wilson vogue is again upon us. At a critical moment in American history, Wilson raised the question that has been with us ever since: How are we to relate to the world, having outgrown both our beginnings as a nation and the policy of hemispheric isolation that responded to our once modest station? In addressing that issue, Wilson articulated, as no other president has done in this century, the nation's ideals and aspirations. It is Wilson who remains the great expositor of America's distinctive reason of state: the expansion of freedom.

To be sure, the Wilsonian vision of a world able to emulate the American example is no different in principle from the vision that may be traced back to the Founding Fathers. But Wilson articulated this vision at a moment when our power was great enough for us to confer upon our role a much more active and ambitious expression. To the old question of how much of the world could be made safe for freedom, Wilson was the first to answer: all of it, or very nearly all of it. And although this response exaggerated American capabilities at the time, such was the impressive growth of American power by World War I that it did not appear implausible.

The American diplomatic tradition in this century cannot be understood apart from Wilson. The strongly reformist impulse that marks American diplomacy is Wilsonian. So, too, is the

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universalism that characterizes this nation's approach to foreign policy. The Truman Doctrine—in holding out the prospect of a world in which free peoples might work out their own destinies in their own way, a world that would make possible the lasting freedom and independence of all nations—was vintage Wilson. The same may be said of Bush's declaration at the outset of the Gulf crisis that "every act of aggression unpunished ... strengthens the forces of chaos and lawlessness that, ultimately, threaten us all." Wilson believed that peace is indivisible, just as he believed that only a democratic world would be a truly peaceful world. The relationship thus drawn between democracy and peace—between freedom and order—has since become virtually an article of faith. That faith has never seemed stronger than at present, and this despite the experience of half a century in which the claims of order were often difficult to reconcile with the claims of freedom.

In the Wilsonian vision, an international order based on the principles of the consent of the governed, equality of right, and freedom from aggression is joined with the idea of America's leadership. It was Wilson who made this leadership an essential condition of our participation in the international system, just as he made American involvement in world politics conditional upon the reformation of that politics. Although the latter condition was finally abandoned in the years following World War II, the former condition was not. America was destined to be the leader of nations, Wilson believed, not simply because of its material power, not even because it was freedom's exemplar, but because it was a nation of idealists. Such a nation had a special claim to leadership. Wilson provided the most elaborate expression of this claim, dressing it in the garments of an ideology of service to mankind, but it has been regularly invoked by his successors.

If we focus on the ends of American foreign policy, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that we have almost all become Wilsonians. If we focus on the means of policy, however, such a conclusion is less than apparent. Although Wilson did intervene in this hemisphere on more occasions than any other president before or since, and although he did finally intervene in the war in Europe, he appeared to believe, no less than his great predecessor Jefferson, that war, and the necessities regularly alleged to attend war's conduct, held out the greatest threat to the very institutions and values in defense of which it might be waged. As nothing else did, war introduced into democratic societies the elements of their corruption. Wilson's defense of collective security did not contradict his view of war. He did not believe that force was a critical element of a system of collective security. Indeed, the concert of power that such a system represented was in his view an alternative to war. By joining the League of Nations, he insisted, we would take the one path affording an escape from the threat of recurrent wars.

In his attempt to fashion a lasting peace, Wilson failed. The vision he set forth for transforming the world went unrealized. We did not redeem the world; instead we largely abandoned it. The old politics returned with a vengeance in the years between the two world wars.

Alone among the nation's presidents, however, Wilson's greatness is found to lie largely in his failures. With other presidents, a more conventional standard is applied. If convention is reversed in Wilson's case, it is presumably because of the nature of his failures. He sought nothing less than a transformation of the international system. In place of a politics characterized by inequality and sanctioned by force, he strove to substitute a politics based on the principles of freedom and equality. The attempt was made in the difficult circumstances of a global conflict that was more destructive than any the modern world had yet experienced. Although the effort failed, it ought not to be judged by the standards applicable to ordinary statecraft. It is not merely by results, and certainly not merely by immediate results, that judgment is to be rendered, but by the magnitude and worth of the ends that Wilson sought and the imposing obstacles that he encountered in pursuing them.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

According to this analysis, the difficulties that Wilson faced made failure virtually inevitable, for rarely has a statesman been as bound by necessity as Wilson is said to have been. He had vainly sought to establish an international order that would prevent the recurrence of the catastrophe of World War I. He had repeatedly warned that if this nation did not play a role—a leading role—in this new order, if it did not accept the responsibility that history had thrust upon it, an even more terrible war would occur. It all came to pass just as he had prophesied it would.

In this view, Wilson represented a "higher realism." Writing in the early 1960s, Arthur S. Link, the leading biographer of Wilson, declared that the historian could confidently say, with the advantage of hindsight, that "among all

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the major statesmen and thoughtful critics of his age, President Wilson was in fact the supreme realist, and that ... what he stood for and fought to accomplish has large meaning for our own generation." Wilson was the supreme realist because he saw more clearly than anyone in his time that the old politics with its parochial interests, its inequalities, its obsession with balancing power, and its reliance on force would have to give way to a new politics of interdependence, greater equality, less concern with power equilibrium, and a reliance on peaceful means to settle disputes. Then, and subsequently, Wilson's critics persisted in labeling his vision as lacking in realism. For realists "thought mainly in strategic and material terms"; they "measured national power by army divisions and naval leases, and the like." If this was realism, Link concluded, "then President Wilson was a realist of a different sort ... let us call his view of the national and international situation ... a 'higher realism,' higher because more perceptive, more in accord with ultimate reality."

From this perspective, Wilson's vision represents a more profound realism than that of his critics, not only because it embodies values that must claim our allegiance, but also because it has since been increasingly vindicated by events. That this vision found only partial realization in the post-World War I system and that the nation did not accept the role that Wilson had urged it to accept must be judged failures. A longer perspective shows that it is only on the basis of his principles that a just and peaceful international order can be based. Wilson's failures were failures only of the moment, for in them were laid the foundations of future achievements that have had a transforming effect on history, our own and the world's.

III.

These themes find different expression in the two recent biographies of Wilson. August Heckscher's book generally follows the view set out by Link. His veneration of Wilson is pronounced. If Wilson did not achieve the liberal peace he sought in Paris, it was because the obstacles blocking such a peace were insurmountable. The grim outcome, Heckscher declares, "was written into the nature of things." Heckscher does not absolve Wilson of his personal shortcomings, which contributed to failure; he only insists that whatever those shortcomings, his principles and his major policies were eternally right.

J. W. Schulte Nordholt's study, by contrast, is suggestive of the realist criticism of Wilson. Reading Nordholt, one is reminded of Hans Morgenthau's strictures. Morgenthau saw Wilson pursuing "moral principles completely divorced from political reality," while consenting to compromises that satisfied nobody's national aspirations, though they represented a betrayal of the president's moral principles; thus Wilson returned from the Paris peace conference "a compromised idealist, an empty-handed statesman, a discredited ally." Nordholt takes a similar view. Wilson's principles, he writes, "more and more broke loose from reality and lived their own lives." But reality took its revenge on these principles; not only were they compromised, but the compromise was not purchased at the price of a satisfactory peace. Nordholt believes, with Morgenthau, that from the outset Wilson adopted a thoroughly ambiguous position toward Europe, a position that made the relationship between the old world and the new world almost impossible:

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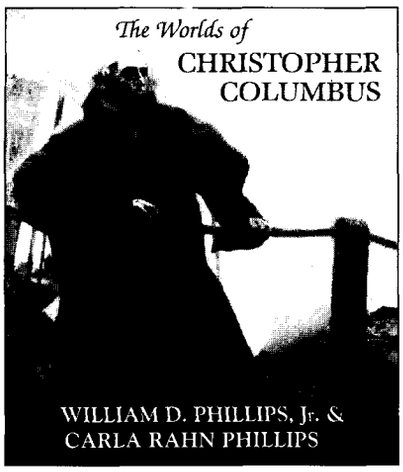

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> [Wilson] wanted America to play a great role in the international order, but without having anything to do with the conflicts of interest in Europe. America would participate and still remain unique, it would stay pure and yet bear responsibility. It would participate in the wicked world and yet keep its hands clean.

The means for undertaking this political equivalent of immaculate conception was, of course, the League of Nations.

The two biographies also differ in their appreciation of the man behind the principles and policies. In the everyday world, men do not claim to act consistently on grounds of high principles; nor do they regularly insist that their every motive in acting is disinterested. Those who do, as Wilson did, attract a good deal of interest, particularly if they come to occupy high office. Wilsonian idealism and devotion to principle provoked the wonderment of observers from the outset, and it has continued to do so to this day.

Those not disposed to accept at face value Wilson's profession of his own motives charge that here was a case of rare self-deception or consummate cynicism. At the time, Wilson's adversaries—the Lodges and the Roosevelts—inclined to the latter interpretation. Their view was strengthened by the fact that on several occasions in his career Wilson had undergone a significant change of position and principle: in becoming the leader of a party, for example, whose prevailing positions he had long viewed unsympathetically. In that instance, as in others, the suspicion arose that the change had sprung not from conviction, but from mere ambition and a will to power.

Despite the persisting interest in Wilson the man, his personality has never been satisfactorily captured. Heckscher makes no attempt to provide a master key that opens this personality to a brighter light. If anything, he conveys the impression that Wilson needs no master key, for there is no real mystery to unlock. Heckscher sees Wilson as a "creative genius" driven not only to change the world, but to do so largely alone. Yet this altogether extraordinary man is depicted as being otherwise quite normal. Until the age of 40, when the first signs of his debilitating illness appeared, Wilson was a happy man, generous and even sweet to others. In time, illness did alter Wilson's personality, and at the end considerably so. Had this not been the case, Heckscher believes that in the fight over the League of Nations Wilson would have sought and achieved a compromise with his opponents and history would have taken a different course. In Heckscher's account, Wilson was, until the fall of 1919, when he suffered his massive stroke, a man who remained "detached and integrated, hopeful but not quite fooled, either by himself or by others." Heckscher's Wilson is the model combination of the idealist and the realist; he is the practical idealist who knows how to play the role of the biblical serpent and the biblical dove.

According to Nordholt, Wilson is anything but a "detached and integrated" personality. He may be the "complete outsider," as Nordholt contends, but that is not to say that he was detached. Nordholt has a master key: Wilson was a poet manqué. Longing to be a poet but lacking the inspiration, he

> retained the poetic attitude toward reality.... Therein lies ... the core of his special greatness but also of his final downfall. As a poet he was confronted, first with the truth of science and then with the reality of society. He was led in both cases to surprising innovations as well as to tragic misunderstandings.

Where Heckscher sees a practical idealist, Nordholt finds a man "the core of [whose] being was poetic, exalted, and naive." It is the poet's temperament that impelled Wilson "to go beyond bounds to seek the absolute," just as it is the poet's faith in words that led Wilson to exist "through words in a way few if any statesmen have" and to believe that reality could be mastered through words.

In the end, these new biographies, however interesting, do not quite clarify the issues of character and motivation that have heretofore remained obscure for the historian. Even as biography, the Heckscher study does not carry us much beyond the work of Link, particularly of the early Link, who was considerably more disposed to view Wilson critically. It was, after all, Link who, in tracing Wilson's course to the White House, early on called attention to the difficulty at times of distinguishing Wilson's devotion to principle from his ambitions. Heckscher scarcely goes that far. While he does point to character traits that marked Wilson's behavior in conflict situations, he leaves unanswered and even unasked the questions about character and motivation that must interest the historian.

Despite an effort to be critical, Heckscher is too much in thrall to his subject to question seriously the sincerity and the depth of Wilson's convictions, to ask why Wilson did not admit of equals in his administration, to speculate on Wilson's obsession with doing

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more at Paris than any one person could do, to inquire into the causes of the radical change in Wilson's attitude toward German responsibility for the war, or to probe the roots of Wilson's guilt over having taken the nation to war. These are the kinds of questions with which a biography of Wilson might be expected to deal. To deal with them, however, would require taking Wilson from the pedestal on which Heckscher has placed him.

Nordholt does address a number of these questions, though often exasperatingly. A Dutch historian, Nordholt manages to seem almost the caricature of the world-wise European dealing with the quintessential representative of a nation of innocents. This all too familiar condescension is not only annoying, it is also misleading, for it results in a portrait of the man that is not dissimilar from the set portrait traditionally drawn of America by Tocqueville, Bryce, and others as a country of naive optimists. So, too, is Wilson "the very embodiment of America's naive optimism." That optimism, Nordholt writes, "encompasses the failure of all nineteenth-century liberalism and belief in progress." We are thus back to the theme of the "nineteenth-century man who found himself in the disastrous twentieth century."

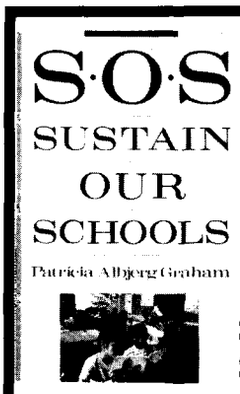
There is something evidently lacking in Nordholt's portrayal of the man who played so large a role in shaping the modern presidency, who possessed so acute an understanding of the sources of political power, and who managed to identify so intimately his own advancement and the greater good that it was often impossible to distinguish between the two. In the epilogue to his study, Nordholt comes close to endorsing the view that so much of his study seems to reject. Wilson, he concludes, "was great not because he succeeded but because he dared." But surely greatness must also bear some relation to *what* the statesman has dared. Nordholt declares that Wilson lives on "as the man who e..bodied 'the principle of hope' in its boundlessness, a utopian in politics, one who was great in his failure." But unless the utopia contains a prophetic vision of how the world ought to be and even may be changed, rather than reflecting little more than a delusional character unable to come to terms with reality, why should its possessor be judged great in his failure? To argue that Wilson's failure was great because of its vision is, in effect, to endorse the theory of Wilson's higher realism.

IV.

If Wilson's personality remains elusive and his motives frequently obscure, does this matter a great deal for the issues raised by the higher realism? I doubt it. For the most part, these issues transcend personality, and must be dealt with on their own terms. They are illuminated in the fight over American participation in the League of Nations. Wilson saw the League as the most significant achievement of his life. It formed the constitution of the new world order and expressed as nothing else his hopes for the world and for America's relationship with it. As such, it is not misleading to say that the League was the most important expression of Wilson's higher realism in statecraft.

The great debate over America's participation in the League of Nations involved nothing less than the question of the nation's future role in the world. What was that role to be now that the United States had emerged from the war as the world's most powerful state? One response was straightforwardly isolationist: we should return to our historic policy of political detachment, above all, from Europe. Quite different was the response of Wilson's principal Republican adversaries. These, after all, were the men who had played a major part in the expansion of the nation's role and interests since the turn of the century. At the time that Theodore Roosevelt was changing America's foreign policy, and Henry Cabot Lodge and Elihu Root were helping him do so, Wilson was a mere professor and university president. Seasoned statesmen and keen observers that they were, these men needed no instruction on the changes that had occurred in the world. They did not dissent from Wilson's view that a policy of isolation no longer responded to the nation's interests, that America must play a greater role in the world, and that it must do so if only because of the inordinate growth in its power.

But this was the only common ground that Wilson shared with the other side in the bitter struggle that ensued. By 1919, moreover, their differences on virtually everything else were of long standing. The issue of American intervention in the war had revealed, as early as 1915, deep disagreement over the nation's interests and how these interests might best be served. Having urged intervention on the Allied side from an early date, and having done so in the belief that the nation's security interests as well as the cause of world peace and justice would be served by a speedy Allied victory, Wilson's Republican critics found in Wilson's abstention



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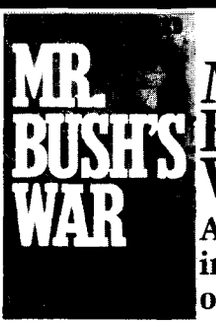

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and in his championing of a compromise peace an utter failure to understand the stakes in the conflict. The bitter struggle over American participation in the League—or more accurately, over the terms of its participation—was but the continuation of this earlier and equally intense struggle. Though inseparable from questions of personality, the debate over the League, like the debate over intervention, transcended personality. Led by intensely partisan men, it transcended political partisanship as well. The debate raised fundamental issues of foreign policy, issues that have been of recurring significance in this century and remain significant today.

Even with the passage of time, the increasing availability of sources, and much admirable scholarship, Wilson's position in the League debate is not easy to delineate. Still, its point of departure was clear enough. It may be found in his insistence that the traditional system of diplomacy, the system that had led to World War I, had to be utterly changed. In submitting the Versailles Treaty to the Senate, Wilson declared: "A war in which [the people] had been bled white to beat the terror that lay concealed in every Balance of Power must not end in a mere victory of arms and a new balance. The monster that had resorted to arms must be put in chains that could not be broken." The peace treaty, above all the provisions containing the League of Nations, formed those chains. Without them, the world would soon return to its old ways with yet another, and even worse, catastrophe as the inevitable result.

America's relationship with the world was made to depend upon how the world was organized. America would abandon its historic position and policy; but it would do so only through membership in the League of Nations. It was only through the League, Wilson insisted, that the nation might take up a new role in the world, for it was only through the League that the old diplomacy would be banished. The choice he posed was between the League—*his* League, not the League of his adversaries—and a return to our historic stance.

Wilson took this position because he undoubtedly believed that this was the choice that faced the nation. Also believing as he did that we would never commit ourselves to participation in the old system, isolation was the only alternative to the League. The war had revealed, however, that the isolation of the past was no longer deemed possible. The isolation of the future, Wilson warned, would be an armed isolation, an isolation that would threaten the integrity of the nation's democratic institutions. Yet bad as this isolation promised to be, he appeared to take for granted that it was still preferable to participating in the old system. On this, at least, the country agreed with him. Although interwar isolation was anything but armed, it was seen by the nation as preferable to active participation in the politics of the balance of power.

The hopes and the expectations that Wilson entertained of the League cannot be understood simply by examining the provisions of the covenant. It was not so much the covenant's provisions as the assumptions that underlay them that fueled these hopes and these expectations. The covenant laid out a procedure for the peaceful settlement of disputes, a procedure that required roughly nine months to fulfill. It obligated the members to take non-military sanctions of a comprehensive sort—the severance of all trade and financial relations and the prohibition of all intercourse—against a member resorting to war in violation of this procedure.

And in Article X, the members undertook to protect each other not against armed aggression—that was undertaken elsewhere—but against the consequences of such aggression. The president's major contribution to the covenant, and the principal object of attack by Republican opponents of the League, this provision obligated the members "to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and political independence of all Members." "All the great wrongs of the world," Wilson declared of Article X, "have their root in the seizure of territory or the control of the political independence of other peoples." The League Council was to "advise" members on the means of fulfilling the commitment that Wilson believed "cut at the very heart of the old system."

This was Wilson's blueprint for transforming the old system and substituting a community of power in place of a balance of power. The League would put an end to militarism and imperialism. It would provide the means not only for achieving a lasting peace, but also for the expansion of freedom, which was the only secure basis for a lasting peace. Yet it would do all this at a modest price. Wilson did not believe that an American commitment to the League would entail substantial sacrifice. Quite the contrary, he was persuaded that it would require very little sacrifice on America's part. This, in fact, was one of his constant themes throughout the League debate: he was asking very little of the American people save that they make, as he had made, an act of faith.

In return for that faith, argued the president, Americans would not only escape a bleak future (armed isolation and eventually war), they would enjoy a position of world leadership and the advantages that attended this position. "If we are partners," Wilson urged, "let me predict we will be the senior partner. The financial leadership ... the industrial primacy ... the commercial advantage will be ours. And the other countries will look to us ... for leadership and direction." This was scarcely the picture of a straitened future. There is no substance to the view that Wilson failed because he asked too much of the American people. He failed *despite* the fact that he asked so little of them while promising so much.

Wilson's belief that the commitment he asked would entail scant sacrifice reflected the assumption that a world community already existed and that it was based on consent more than on coercion. This being so, the great power in this community, as in every community, was the power of public opinion. The covenant's provisions respecting the peaceful settlement of disputes were designed to ensure that this power—the moral force of the world, which was superior to physical force—could be brought to bear on the disputants. Speaking in the plenary session of the peace conference, Wilson said of the covenant: "Throughout this instrument we are depending primarily and chiefly upon one great force, and that is the moral force of the public opinion of the world, the cleansing and clarifying and compelling influence of publicity."

Public opinion would determine the rights and the wrongs of a dispute. And having once done so, it would prevail. Wilson was confident that "no nation is going to look the calm judgment of mankind in the face for nine months and then go to war." But if by chance it did, the covenant provided for something more effective than war: the boycott. "A nation that is boycotted," Wilson declared, "is a nation that is in sight of surrender. Apply this economic, peaceful, silent, deadly remedy and there will be no need for force."

This belief in the effectiveness of isolating the covenant-breaking state, of preventing all financial, commercial, or personal intercourse between it and the nationals of any other state, reflected the experience of the wartime blockade of Germany. But it also expressed the

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conviction that men and nations belong to a greater community that claims their allegiance. This being so, "the most terrible thing is outlawry. The most formidable thing is to be absolutely isolated." The boycott was the "substitute for war"; it was the "kernel of the engagement." War remained a possibility, but it was "on the outskirts ... a remote and secondary threat ... a last resort." For all practical purposes it might be neglected, as Wilson did neglect it in his vision of the future.

The vision of the future—above all of the relationship between force and peace—held by Wilson's principal opponents was very different. Lodge took for granted, as did Root, that peace would continue to rest on force. In the postwar world, as in the prewar world, power would have to be balanced against power; it would have to be balanced in the ways that it had always been balanced, above all by alliances. The world was not going to be suddenly transformed, League or no League. The traditional system, the old diplomacy, would persist; and the task of the statesman was to come to terms with it while preserving his nation's interest.

To the Republican leaders, Wilson's obsession with the League of Nations as the centerpiece of the peace settlement was an evasion of this task. The first and most important problem confronting the peacemakers, they believed, was not the construction of a universal system of collective security that promised to make the world safe for democracy, but the fashioning of a peace settlement in Europe that would make the world safe from Germany. The creation of a League of Nations must not provide a justification—or an excuse—for failing to do what had to be done to secure the peace. Early in the gathering struggle, Lodge had warned Wilson against tying the League to the peace treaty, insisting that to do so would only serve to invite disagreement and to delay a settlement of the German problem. The president had brusquely rejected this advice; the League was made an integral part of the peace treaty. Wilson had counted on the Senate's reluctance to reject the League, if by doing so it also rejected the entire treaty. Here, as elsewhere, his strategy failed.

When Wilson returned from Paris, he brought with him not only the peace treaty embodying his League of Nations, but also a treaty in which the United States and Great Britain pledged to guarantee the Franco-German border. The treaty was a form of compensation to the French for having relinquished their demands for an inter-

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national military force and for the separation of the Rhineland from Germany. Wilson was never happy with the guarantee treaty. Not only was it an alliance (however much Wilson was at pains to deny this), it also cast doubt on the effectiveness of the security system established in the covenant. Nor was this apparent inconsistency entirely removed by the provision in the guarantee treaty that subordinated it to the League and stipulated that it remain operative only until such time as a majority of the League Council should declare that the permanent arrangements provided for in the covenant were satisfactory.

In contrast with Wilson's embarrassment over the French guarantee treaty, the Republican leaders viewed the treaty as a large step in the right direction. Their only objection was to the treaty's subordination to the League's authority. In setting out Republican policy in June 1919, Root wrote to Lodge: "If it is necessary for the security of western Europe that we should agree to go to the support say of France if attacked, let us agree to do that particular thing plainly, so that every man and woman in the country will understand that." The particularity of the guarantee treaty stood in striking contrast with the generality of the covenant, above all with Article X, which was to Root "a vague universal obligation" the meaning of which remained entirely unclear.

As the Republican leader in the Senate entrusted with carrying out the policy set down by Root, Lodge shared these sentiments. If anything, he went further than Root in his belief that to ensure against the prospect that Germany would again resort to war, the United States would have to be a guarantor of a European settlement. This would necessitate an intimate relationship with the Allies, perhaps for as long as a generation—an objective best served in his view by an Anglo-Franco-American alliance. Lodge was willing to accept the guarantee treaty Wilson had made. But the treaty was never even reported out of committee. Abandoned, in fact, by the president and his faithful supporters, it never had any real prospect of being approved by the Senate.

In Europe, Lodge argued, the League failed to do what needed to be done: settle the German problem. From the outset, Lodge regarded the League as a pious fraud if it did not have the power to enforce its authority. In his judgment, which was in agreement with the French view, the organization would have no power, since it would have no independent military force. Yet this apparently powerless organization was to be the means through which the United States would commit itself not to the security of one state but to the security of most states of the world.

Unwilling, in effect, to extend an effective guarantee to France, Wilson was nevertheless intent on extending what he contended was an effective guarantee (in Article X of the covenant) to some forty-odd states. Would the nation be disposed to redeem so sweeping a commitment? Would it have the means to do so? Was it in the nation's interest to do so? Lodge responded negatively to these questions. He was persuaded, and with reason, that the public had little appreciation of what it was being committed to; once it did, however, support for the League would surely decline. Future administrations could not be expected to remain insensitive to such decline. The prospect would eventually arise that an obligation found burdensome to fulfill, and perhaps dangerous, would be abandoned. To the Republican leaders, little seemed more threatening to world order and stability than the failure of governments to honor their commitments.

What precisely would membership in the League commit us to, Lodge and Root insistently asked. In particular, they wanted to know, what specific obligation was entailed by undertaking to "preserve against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence" of member states? Wilson never directly answered the question. His insistence that Article X created a moral obligation but not a legal one responded to the contention that this provision legally obligated a member to use force against an aggressor if the League Council so advised. That contention was entirely without merit, as Wilson pointed out. Council advice was not binding. Even as advice, it was subject to veto.

Nor was there any question but that Congress had to determine in a given instance whether to resort to war. "Nothing could have been made more clear to the [peace] conference," Wilson declared at a White House meeting to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "than the right of our Congress under our Constitution to exercise its independent judgment in all matters of peace and war. No attempt was made to question, or limit that right." Still, the president insisted, there *was* an obligation in Article X and although "binding in conscience only," it was "all the more grave and solemn" for that reason. In response to a senator's question whether we would be under any legal obligation to participate in a case of aggression that is "perfectly obvious and accepted" as such and that cannot be repealed except by force of arms, Wilson replied: "No sir; but we would be under an absolutely compelling moral obligation."

Lodge and Root considered Wilson's distinction between a legal and moral obligation confusing and inconsistent at best and demoralizing and destructive at worst. It encouraged the view, they argued, that treaty commitments need not be honored. In this, they did Wilson less than justice. Wilson sought to distinguish between the letter and the spirit of Article X. He appeared to be saying that the letter did not bind (legally) but the spirit did (morally). And the spirit—what Wilson said was the deeper meaning of Article X—committed us irrespective of the character of Council "advice" or the nature of our constitutional arrangements. The editors of the Wilson Papers observe that in his later speeches, "Wilson frequently uses Article X as the metaphor for the moral obligation of the American people to preserve the peace and stability of the world." Nearer the mark, it would seem, is that for Wilson Article X *was* the moral obligation to preserve the peace and the stability of the world.

The Lodge reservation to Article X, largely the work of the mild reservationists, was the Republicans' response to the uncertainty that had arisen over the meaning of that provision. It declared that the United States assumed no obligation either to preserve the territorial integrity or political independence of any other country or to employ its military or naval forces under any article of the treaty for any purpose unless in any particular case Congress shall so provide. The reservation, its supporters contended, would remove the possibility that at some later date the nation might be charged with failing to meet its obligation by refusing to preserve a member state against aggression. That obligation was to Wilson the very core of the entire enterprise; its denial was, he insisted, the evisceration of the covenant.

The Treaty of Versailles was not ratified by the Senate. Wilson would accept neither the Lodge reservation nor any variation of it. Might he have done so *and* preserved his League? I fail to see how. There was no apparent way of bridging the difference between the insistent affirmation of an obligation and the flat denial of one. Either Article X conveyed an obligation, as Wilson insisted, or it did not, as the

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Lodge reservation plainly stated. There was no way to compromise on this issue. It did not turn on the status of advice from the League Council or on the nature of constitutional arrangements.

Nor is there much reason to think it could and would somehow have been compromised by a Wilson in better health, as both Heckscher and the editors of the Wilson Papers suggest. A sick Wilson certainly handled the fight badly; but it does not follow from this that a healthier Wilson would have accepted a "compromise" that meant, in effect, the abandonment of something in which he so deeply believed. Those who believe that the issue over Article X might nevertheless have been compromised do so because they assume that American membership in the League was the all-important consideration, rather than the terms of this membership. Even if that assumption is granted, it does not follow that the issue over which the treaty was rejected was in fact compromisable.

The Great Debate of 1919 is regularly characterized by historians as one between Wilsonian internationalism and an opposition comprising isolationists and limited internationalists. Wilson's internationalism is seen in his concern for the peace and freedom of the world and in his multilateralism. By contrast, Wilson's major opponents are seen to have been unwilling to commit the nation's power to the pursuit of universal peace and freedom. Their unwillingness to do so was a reflection of their innate conservatism. No less than Wilson, they saw in America an example to the world. At the same time, their understanding of that example was very different from Wilson's. In his illuminating biography of Henry Cabot Lodge, William Widenor notes that while Lodge's conception of America's world role was as idealistic as Wilson's, there was a crucial difference: "Lodge believed that America had evolved a special, historical individuality and a unique system of values which were as much the product of propitious circumstances as anything else."

Although prepared to go to great lengths, Widenor insists, "to defend and preserve that individuality, he did not, like Wilson, seek its preservation in an attempt to secure its universal acceptance." The issue for Lodge was not the value of freedom, but what power could accomplish in spreading freedom. He also questioned whether the universalization of freedom was a proper interest of foreign policy. Lodge believed that it was not, just as he believed that the commitment that Wilson would have the nation make in joining the League of Nations constituted, if acted upon in good faith, a sweeping departure from the nation's traditions in foreign policy, for which the national interest provided no justification.

It may be said that Lodge and Root opposed Wilson's League because they took the commitment that they saw *this* League to entail much more seriously than Wilson did. In this perspective, their opposition was largely the result of their conviction that in the new world, as in the old, peace would depend centrally upon the ability and the willingness to use force. Wilson, taking an entirely different view of the relationship between peace and force, was able to take an entirely different view of the commitment entailed by membership in the League. The price of Wilson's internationalism was modest, more so than the limited internationalism of his opponents. While very broad, this internationalism was also very shallow. Committed to cooperative efforts, Wilson's internationalism assumed a leadership role in these efforts that nevertheless promised to preserve the substance of a traditional freedom of action.

V.

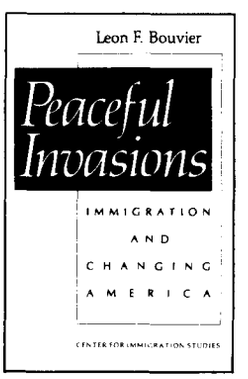
The outcome of the Great Debate favored neither of the principals. The nation's postwar role certainly bore little resemblance to Wilson's vision, but it also bore little resemblance to Lodge's position. In rejecting the Versailles Treaty, America not only rejected membership in the League, it refused to take any responsibility for upholding the postwar territorial settlement in Europe. The latter refusal was the litmus test of interwar isolationism.

There is a common view that if Wilson had accepted the Lodge reservation, history would have taken a different course. This belief in the effects of American participation in the League, on whatever terms, goes beyond the expectations that Wilson himself entertained. Wilson thought that joining the League on his terms would change the course of history. But why should America's joining on either Wilson's terms or Lodge's terms have changed the history of the interwar period, unless one assumes that the act of joining would have been tantamount to the unreserved commitment of American power to the postwar settlement? The Lodge reservation, however, explicitly ruled

PEACEFUL INVASIONS

Immigration and Changing America

by Leon Bouvier



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out such blanket commitment, while Wilson's vision of America's role in the League afforded little reason to take such commitment seriously if made.

There is, in any event, little evidence that the public was disposed to back the kind of commitment that was only made thirty years later in the wake of World War II, when a direct threat was posed to Europe by a victorious and hostile Soviet Union. Only in creating the Western Alliance in 1949 did the United States make the sort of commitment in time of peace that, had a comparable commitment been made after World War I, would almost certainly have changed the course of history. This resembled the kind of alliance commitment to Europe that Lodge had earlier urged. Indeed, Lodge's proposal of an alliance with France and Great Britain to make the world safe from Germany may well be seen as the abortive forerunner of the later alliance that made the world safe from the Soviet Union.

If the public in 1919 was still far from ready to commit the nation's power in the manner it finally did after World War II, the principal reason must be found in the hold exercised by the past. Tradition, however deeply embedded, may be broken by an experience that is compelling. But World War I had not been such an experience for America. Nor did Wilson help to compensate for an experience that had left the public essentially confused. If anything, he contributed significantly to its confusion, above all by his failure to provide a consistent and persuasive explanation of why we intervened in the war. In later exhorting the nation to join the League, this prior failure weighed heavily on the outcome of the debate. To its burden, Wilson added the confusion generated by Article X. Finally, he confronted the nation with the choice of either joining the League or returning to isolation, thereby making the latter course all the more likely when the League was once defeated.

When the nation did finally commit its great power in time of peace, it did so in a manner that Wilson had opposed. America's post-World War II policy embraced the means of the old diplomacy. Containment had, as its essential feature, the organization of power to counter power. In the pursuit of a stable balance of power, an alliance system was created and sustained over a period of four decades. All this can scarcely be seen as a vindication of Wilsonian higher realism. In terms of the means employed, America's cold war policy was a rejection of Wilson's vision. And it is the means, after all, that must be regarded as the principal test of Wilson's vision in this century, for the ends he aspired to—above all, the expansion of freedom—are the ends to which virtually all American statesmen have aspired, though they have given these ends less eloquent expression than Wilson.

If Wilson cannot be seen as having been vindicated by the cold war, may he be seen as vindicated by the Gulf war, and by the revival today, in the form of Bush's "new world order," of collective security? It would not seem so. Bush's vision of a new order gives a role to force that is very far removed from the vision that Wilson entertained. Indeed, the Bush vision appears more like a bastard offspring of two opposing traditions in American foreign policy. The tradition represented by Jefferson and Wilson entertained grand ambitions, but it was equally insistent on achieving these ambitions through measures short of war. The tradition represented by Hamilton and Lodge eschewed grand ambitions and universal commitments, while acknowledging the need for military preparedness and believing that force would remain the great arbiter of conflicts among nations. George Bush's vision embraces universal aspirations and military force. A product of both traditions, it is one from which each parent would likely have recoiled. •

Rocky Mountain Low

BY FRANK RICH

Aspen
produced, directed, and edited by Frederick Wiseman
(Zipporah Films)

Whiteout: Lost in Aspen
by Ted Conover
(Random House, 269 pp., $20)

Like millions of others who have never been to Aspen (population 6,000; average house price as of 1988, $1 million-plus), I guess that I should be grateful to public television for transporting me there vicariously. PBS's Christmas gift to a needy nation was *Aspen*, a two-and-a-half-hour documentary by Frederick Wiseman, the cinema verité master whose previous films about American institutions have occasionally lingered over the lightweight (a race track, a department store, a modeling agency), but more often have gravitated toward the deep-dish, and sometimes toward some of the more excruciating corners of American society: a juvenile court, a welfare office, the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, and, most notoriously, a hospital for the criminally insane (*Titicut Follies*).

Since public television rarely traffics in utter frivolity (British imports excepted), and since Wiseman is not known for viewing his subjects from the supine perspective of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," it figured that "Aspen" was not being offered entirely as a seasonal diversion for audiences too housebound by the recession to be snowbound at a glitzy resort. A PBS "Aspen" would presumably aim for a higher truth; and it would surely be beneath Wiseman to reopen the Claudine Longet–Spider Sabich shooting incident, or to trade upon Aspen's closest equivalent to the Zapruder film, the sequence of supermarket-tabloid snapshots that records Donald's epochal flirtation with Marla in full view of Ivana on the slopes. Yet the revelations of "Aspen" proved to be as rare as its celebrity footage. Wiseman's film, not surprisingly, is very diligently modulated, but it suffers from a prettifying didacticism that is new in his work.

Beautiful shots of pristine nature—mountainous vistas, voluptuous full moons—periodically give way to glimpses of the vulgar homes and the antiseptic shopping malls with which humans have sullied the prospect. And when these humans open their mouths, they add another form of pollution. In a seminar fixated on "how to grow old gracefully," an evangelist for "surgery of appearance" shows before-and-after slides to reveal how a girl who had "inherited her father's ethnic nose" could, through modern medicine, "achieve a very gratifying result" if only

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she might disregard her "Jewish grandmother's guilt trip." A seminar on "God and the Global Economy" provokes discussion of "the yuppie evangelical view, which a lot of us here aspire to." At an art class, a teacher wearing a "Demoiselles d'Avignon" sweatshirt sips wine while enthusiastically likening his middle-aged students' crude sketches of a well-appointed Aspen living room to Gauguin, Matisse, and *Guernica*.

Not a pretty picture, but such discomfor ng vignettes are balanced by others in which more prosaic Aspenites, a few of them identifiable by their unreconstructed noses as just folks, can be seen celebrating the simple joys of family or searching earnestly for justice (in the case of Hispanic workers) or for enlightenment, divine or otherwise. In "Aspen," the decent Aspen cancels out the decadent Aspen; and the snow, that great visual leveler, gently and finally cloaks everything, until the viewer cannot see the forest *or* the trees. One is left with no sense of how this town, its exquisite skiing terrain aside, differs from any other enclave of the '80s rich, from Beverly Hills to East Hampton.

Could Wiseman—who, in his dour and positivistic way, is as much a pioneer of '60s-style alternative journalism as Aspen's gonzo reporter Hunter S. Thompson—have been seduced by the blinding light and easy flow of his setting? Not likely; he is one of the great disabusers and disillusioners. More likely is that Aspen turned out to be an inappropriate subject for him, not because cinema verité can show only suffering and the ills of a society, but for a more unexpected reason, a reason of style. In this instance, Wiseman's impeccably laid-back documentary technique ends up looking rather like a product of the Aspen aesthetic itself. The detachment, the informality, the dilatoriness, the belief in the telling power of appearances and surfaces: all of these signatures of the Wiseman style seem here not like means for examining his subject, but like complicities with it. "Aspen" is much too mellow. Maybe PBS *did* intend it as a lulling holiday entertainment—intellectual white noise for a white Christmas, a New Age *It's a Wonderful Life* to be accompanied by a Windham Hill soundtrack of one's choice.

All this is too bad, because there is a real story to be reported in Aspen. In a small but genuine victory for print over video, Ted Conover, whose past books have chronicled hoboes and illegal aliens, has told it in his new book, an account of two years among the rarefied locals. Conover freely admits to losing his own perspective on the place by staying there too long; his title refers to the moral disorientation that he experienced after the excess of high living went to his head. Still, he retrieves his bearings and his values just in time to pack his bags and go elsewhere to set down his tale.

Unburdened by a camera—and blessed with such local calling cards as youth, blond hair, bachelorhood, and Colorado roots—Conover insinuated himself into every stratum of the community. He landed jobs as a cabbie for the Mellow Yellow Taxi Company, as a reporter for the *Aspen Times*, and as an extra in the "John Denver's Christmas in Aspen" television special. He crashed the exclusive parties given by the former "Miami Vice" star Don Johnson and the former Playboy Mansion first bunny Barbi Benton. (Aspen is lousy with those famous for "being rich and washed up at a fairly young age.") He attended New Age seminars far more ludicrous than those in Wiseman's film, and got to meet founding fathers of the old Aspen of the 1950s, the drug-culture Aspen of the 1960s (Thompson included), and the go-go Aspen of the 1980s. So divergent are Conover's and Wiseman's Aspens that virtually the only figure who

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appears in both works is Ed Bradley of "60 Minutes," who is seen working out on an exercycle by day in "Aspen" and hanging out with the rock star Don Henley by night in *Whiteout*; and he is, in any case, one of the very few blacks conspicuously in residence.

Conover's book is not a political tract or an exercise in muckraking. It is an engaging, well-reported narrative that rarely condescends to its subject. The even-handed tone, far more convincingly objective than Wiseman's narration-free, I-am-a-camera point of view, is no small achievement, given that the Aspen cast of characters includes such barn-size satirical targets as exclusive health clubs, over-the-hill drug dealers, movie stars and rock stars of wattages bright (Jack Nicholson), dim (Stevie Nicks), and extinguished (Jill St. John). Not to mention all sorts of tycoons, some of whom spend well into seven figures for ludicrously appointed "log cabins on steroids," rustic vacation homes that are occupied a few weeks a year.

At least overtly, the main agenda of Conover's book is to record yet another chapter in the closing of the American West. A silver boom town that quickly went bust when Congress eliminated the silver standard in 1893, with a population as low as 600 or 700 as recently as 1937, Aspen was revived after World War II only to confront what might be called a virtual reality version of bust today. As Conover puts it, Aspen now offers its denizens a life style instead of a life. There is nowhere to buy underwear and socks. "The old post office became an Esprit store, the Elks Lodge a Hard Rock Cafe, Crossroads Drug a Banana Republic."

Aspen's new decline, Conover notes, is not the typical small town's "death of slow attrition as businesses moved out and young people failed to return." It is, rather, a process of "semiabandonment." The absentee owners, rarely in town themselves, have driven up prices so monstrously that no one else can live there in their absence. (Even the service employees, including a majority of the police force, are commuters from "downvalley.") One is tempted to assume that Aspen is a Disneyland set where all the VIPs (among them Michael Eisner, major domo of the actual Disney empire) dress up as ski bunnies during their brief visits, much as actors costumed as Disney cartoon characters populate a theme park.

Yet the history that Conover recounts gradually makes one feel that Aspen is a failure of something larger than taste, and that the blame for that failure cannot be placed entirely on new money and its penchant for mammoth redwood decks, hot tubs, and private jets. In its current form, Aspen was invented by a high-minded dreamer named Walter Paepcke, a German immigrant and Chicago businessman devoted to Mortimer Adler and Robert Hutchins, the avatars of Great Books. As a businessman, Paepcke, a friend of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, brought Bauhaus design principles to the Container Corporation of America. As a fund-raiser for the University of Chicago, he put a ghost town called Aspen on the map in 1949, by moving the planned Goethe Bicentennial Festival of the University of Chicago (where Adler taught and Hutchins was president) to the mountains, and securing the attendance of no less a figure than Albert Schweitzer, in his only visit to the United States.

The success of the Goethe celebration was soon institutionalized by Paepcke into the Aspen Institute, an early think tank where great thoughts, like great books, could be savored in perpetuity in a healthy outdoor setting. Paepcke had a vision "for man's complete life ... where he can profit by healthy physical recreation, with facilities at hand for his enjoyment of art, music, and education." The vision was christened *The Aspen Idea* in a book by Sidney Hyman, another University of Chicago professor hired by the institute to write it. Could there have been a more enlightened way for a resort to be conceived?

The liberal idealism that gave birth to Aspen stands in stark contrast to the usual motive for the creation of American fun havens, which is greed. The post-World War II reinvention of Aspen has absolutely nothing in common with the contemporaneous invention of Las Vegas, even though both resorts were artificially created in the same American West and were phenomena of the same postwar boom. And yet, by the time that the Aspen Institute and Aspen parted ways—"after the anti-growth city council vetoed the institute's plan to build a large hotel on its Aspen Meadows land"—Aspen's favored doctor was Werner Erhard, not Albert Schweitzer, and its culture had little to do with Goethe except to the extent that it was Faustian.

The Aspen Institute moved to Maryland, maintaining only a token presence in Aspen, and its chairman, Robert O. Anderson, explained why in the course of an angry parting: "Trying to run something of a serious nature in a town that is dedicated only to fun is probably one of our permanent problems. Imagine trying to run a great university in Las Vegas." In Anderson's view, then, Aspen had become a Las Vegas by the 1970s. In Conover's telling, it was the

Walking Around

Sometimes it's loss I want, a slow acid
eating my bones, wife and son gone forever,
loss that would paint this moon yellow
and give these houses voices beneath their paint.

I would sleep by day, and my grief,
the thinnest of shirts, would protect me
from nothing: at night, the screams of birds,
my wife's heart beating in the trunks

of the thickest trees, my son dead somewhere,
or falling asleep to voices he's never heard,
his pajamas white as baby teeth, the birthmark
under his chin dark as a closed-up flower.

And maybe before following the night's meanders,
I would glance up at these curtained windows
furred by silence and paper snowflakes,
where my wife and son are sleeping now,

where we live, the three of us, like plants
huddled in a window-box, so intertwined
we no longer hear the song of our leaves,
or feel the sweet tangle of our roots.

LANCE LARSEN

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1960s that can be blamed for turning the Aspen idea into a parody of itself:

> The children of the '60s were probably more influential in lending Aspen a character than any other group. The town's Paepcke-inspired air of utopian possibility fit well with the '60s desire for "paradise now." It was a young place, sufficiently in flux to have a sense of alternatives about it. It was in the mountains, far from cities and repressive childhoods, but close to nature. Commerce seemed something the town was *not* about—Babbitt lived far away. Small w[illegible] beautiful, Aspen was both, and the young flocked to it.

The perennially popular film at the Isis Theater was that lunatics-take-over-the-asylum classic *King of Hearts*, drugs were ubiquitous, and Hunter S. Thompson ran for sheriff. "The '60s enshrinement of youth was adopted practically as a mission statement by Aspen," Conover writes.

> The skiing was all downhill from there. The '60s ethos at its most mindless is still the quicksand on which Aspen stands. It is a survival of the hippie 1960s of head shops and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, not that of serious political dissent. (Aspen's brand of '60s politics is typified by a druggie's line, quoted by Conover, that "if only we could have gotten LBJ to smoke some reefer, we would have been out of Vietnam like *that*.") And now the flower-child parody of the Paepcke vision has been corrupted further by the influx of '80s cash and designer drugs. Wealthy and idle peace-and-love-crazed dilettantes now have costly self-realization cults instead of ashrams, quartz crystals instead of tie-dyed T-shirts, condominiums instead of crash pads, John Denver instead of John Lennon. Conover argues that paradise "has not been lost" but "has simply changed hands." But Paradise is not an idea in Aspen anymore, it is the town's most popular bar (the site of an environmental fund-raiser in the Wiseman film).

Aspen's turnover is symptomatic of the wider collapse of '60s values. There's a dark comic scene in *Whiteout* in which Thompson, whose "rarefied appearance, virtual unintelligibility, and working manner made you wonder whether he was an imbecile or a genius," flees a photo session with Annie Leibovitz because her preliminary Polaroid shots remind him so much of her final portraits of John Belushi that the good doctor fears Belushi's drug-induced demise is being prophesied as his own. The late 1980s Aspen of *Whiteout* is full of '60s burnouts and has-beens, from the now blow-dried Nitty Gritty Dirt Band to the ubiquitous Teddy Kennedy, spotted with a woman on his lap at one of the town's seventy-one bars, to the various New Age proselytizers who somehow manage to turn lavish seminars on "choices" and "ethics" into feel-good rallies in which cheers like "GO-O-O, PLANET!" replace coherent thought.

At one such "Choices of the Future" symposium, the illustrious guest speakers include Leo Buscaglia (the "Dr. Hug" of self-improvement best-sellerdom), Paul Hawken (of Smith & Hawken, the trendy garden-supply catalog retailer), Jay Hair (head of the National Wildlife Federation), and Mayor Andrew Young of Atlanta. The philosophy preached is so vapid and amoral that Conover writes:

> It occurred to me that a Klansman could pass through Choices with racist ideals unchallenged, emerging secure in his sense of his own commitment. In a sense, I thought, a Klansman would be one of the more advanced participants, since at least a Klansman would know what he believed in.

> The people in Aspen believe in everything and nothing. They are against development as long as they can expand their own properties. They are environmentalists whose own air is polluted by restaurant-grill emissions and condominium fireplace smoke. They nearly voted in an ordinance outlawing the sale of fur coats, yet they are often to be seen in gutter-length skins. Their mayor was the only one in Colorado to endorse Jesse Jackson for president in 1988, yet the minority population of the town, if the cross-sections depicted by Conover and Wiseman are any indication, is minuscule. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jane Fonda, the most famous hardbodies of the right and left, both hang out in Aspen (in season, naturally), as if to certify the obliteration of all party differences in an era when the true aristocracy are what Conover calls the "body Nazis," who can remain aerobically or surgically forever young. "'Don't trust anyone over 30,'" he writes, "though it has been good to plastic surgeons, is not a credo to grow old by."

But grow old is precisely what Aspen won't do, according to Conover. Through a crude whammy of frontier justice, Aspen is paying for its narcissism by inexorably reverting to its old life as a ghost town; the gold standard has proved as disastrous as the silver standard. But the corrupted Aspen idea won't die so easily, not least because half of the people who make our movies, our television programs, our pop music, and our popular journalism still winter there. The entertainment establishment

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is so in thrall to the blond, monied, blissed-out, oh-so-ecologically-sound Disneyland aesthetics of Aspen that the Aspen idea has become the American idea, at least as promoted through mass culture. Consider Steven Spielberg's *Hook* and Michael Jackson's "Black or White." Both only corrupt old hippie ideals of youthful rebellion and interracial utopia by remaking them in the glossy Aspen style: Never-Never Land is now an ostentatious resort in the theme-park manner, and Jackson's vision of racial and sexual harmony is a triumph of cosmetic surgery. If PBS wants to give its viewers a true escape next Christmas, it really should send a crew to the site of what was always the real, and the most durable, counterculture: Las Vegas.

FRANK RICH is the theater critic of *The New York Times.*

Anatomy of Melancholy

BY CHRISTOPHER BENFEY

Edgar A. Poe: Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance by Kenneth Silverman

(HarperCollins, 564 pp., $27.50)

The subtlety of Kenneth Silverman's new life of Poe begins with the title. For this is not a book about the mythical figure "Edgar Allan Poe," that shrouded specter who walks out of the Halloween shadows, black cat on one shoulder and raven on the other, into every American childhood. Nor is it a book about the French invention "Edgar Poe," the *poète maudit* who improbably and singlehandedly founded modern French literature. (Baudelaire said he prayed each morning to God, to his father, and to Poe.) This is, instead, a biography of the hardworking American writer who signed his multifarious works "Edgar A. Poe," suppressing with that signature the shame that attended his middle name, while stressing the pride he took in being one of the illustrious Poes—"a poet," as he liked to put it in a lame pun, "to the T."

The temptation to treat Poe's life as he himself conceived it—tragic, heart-breaking, star-crossed, forlorn—must be strong for any biographer. Silverman's perspective, by contrast, is primarily comic; he takes a tonic pleasure in Poe's own sense of personal grandeur and lost entitlements. One might expect this new biography, in our revisionary age, to pierce the many legends surrounding Poe's life: his incestuous child bride, the rumors of necrophilia, the drugs and drunkenness, the bizarre death. And Silverman does present the known facts in an admirably clear and sure-footed narrative. In shedding light on many a dark event, however, another larger mystery looms. At the end of the book, one is left wondering how so harassed and so haunted a man could have found the time and strength to write as consecutively and well as Poe did.

Though he is usually considered a Southern writer, Poe managed to be born in Boston, in January 1809; and while he carried on a lifelong vendetta against New England authors such as Emerson and Longfellow, he still referred, on at least one occasion, to "We Bostonians." His father was a bad actor from a good family. Son of the Revolutionary War hero General David Poe of Baltimore, David Junior had dropped a law career for the social and financial insecurity of the stage. Unfortunately, he suffered from stage fright. Hooted during performances—"a footman is the extent of what he ought to attempt," sniped one critic—he eventually abandoned his career, his three children, and his wife, the far more successful actress Eliza Poe.

Part of Eliza's enormous appeal was her waiflike demeanor, but what kept her thin was consumption, and she survived her husband's flight by only a couple of years. She had a large following in the South where she died, in Richmond, Virginia, in 1811. Edgar, not quite 3, was probably present at her deathbed. A well-off businessman named John Allan and his sickly wife, Fanny, took Edgar into their childless family. Poe's relations with the pompous and self-satisfied Allan were always strained, and Fanny was, according to Silverman, "often ill and sometimes absent." Allan, who had worked his way up from a clerkship in a tobacco brokerage, felt that Poe should be grateful for anything he got; Poe in turn felt humiliated by never getting enough.

The pattern of Poe's life, his steady sense of loneliness and thwarted entitlement balanced by intellectual precocity, was set early on. In London from 1815 to 1820, where Allan's firm did a lot of its trade, Edgar Allan (as he was then called) took dancing lessons—he was "thin as a rasor"—and learned to read Latin "pretty sharply." Back in Richmond, he began to learn French and to prepare for college.

During his year of study at the new University of Virginia at Charlottesville, Poe was surrounded by rich lads attended by slaves. On the scant allowance that Allan gave him, Poe couldn't afford to buy his own books. Still, he was something of a star at Jefferson's fledgling university, excelling at languages and "adept in all gymnastic exercises." He was appalled, however, by the excesses of his fellow students, who ran riot amid Jefferson's lax rules. Pistols, Poe told Allan, were "all the fashion" on campus, and he recounted grisly details from one of the many fights he witnessed there. One student had beaten another and then "began to bite." "I saw the arm afterwards," Poe reported, "and it was really a serious matter—It was bitten from the shoulder to the elbow—and it is likely that pieces of flesh as large as my hand will be obliged to be cut out."

Poe had begun to fiddle with verses before his year at Charlottesville, and he modeled his poetry and his athletic prowess on Byron's. He won local fame for swimming six miles in the James River, under a hot sun and against the tide, and pronounced that "Byron's paddle across the Hellespont was mere child's play in comparison." Despite Poe's early success at the university, however, Allan refused to send him back for a second year, claiming (apparently with some justification) that Poe had run up considerable gambling debts. Poe countered that he gambled to pay for his basic needs. They quarreled, and Poe fled northward, leaving behind a characteristically melodramatic letter to Allan explaining that he was in search of "some place in the wide world where I will be treated—not as *you* have treated me."

Like many an indigent younger son, Poe found such a place in the Army, and eventually he ended up at West Point for a year. His claim to have wandered through Europe in the meantime, and to have participated Byronically in the liberation of Greece, seems unfounded. Poe apparently thought that Allan, impressed with his straight-arrow Army career, would finally shower him with money and even formally adopt him. But Allan, who had lost his first wife, now married another and started a family. Poe realized that he would get nothing from that quarter. While the Army, as Sil-

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verman notes, was "a family that was perhaps as intimate and attentive as any he had ever known," Poe had other ambitions. He managed to get himself court-martialed and expelled, but his West Point classmates chipped in to finance his first book of poems. They were disappointed in the results, which bore no resemblance to the witty doggerel with which Poe had amused them.

Poe settled first in Baltimore, then in New York, determined henceforth to be more of a Poe than an Allan. He moved in with his father's widowed sister, Maria Clemm, known for obscure reasons as "Muddy." Then he fell in love with Muddy's daughter Virginia, whom Poe called "Sissy," for sister. The prospect of marriage, already indecorous on the count of incest, was doubly so because of the bride's age: she was 13, though one feels that Poe would not have balked had she been 10 or even 8. Silverman helpfully points out that although marriage between first cousins was "not unusual at the time," Sissy's age was. To support the tight little menage consecrated by the wedding, Poe slaved away in various Grub Street positions, signing his name to a guide to seashells and honing his proofreading skills.

We don't know much about Poe's relations with Sissy. It may be, as Silverman suggests, that he finally found the domestic refuge he longed for. Still, there are hints of unhappiness in his increasing alcoholism, and the marriages in the tales that he was starting to write are consistently nightmarish. Much of the violence in his stories circles menacingly around bedrooms, where love seems as much a prison as a haven. The crazed killer of "The Tell-Tale Heart" throttles his housemate after claiming that he "loved the old man." The murderer in "The Black Cat"—a tale that purports to be "a series of mere household events"—kills both his cat ("I ... hung it *because* I knew that it had loved me") and his wife, then walls them up together in the cellar.

Poe was lucid enough about his own erotic needs: "I could not love except where Death / Was mingling his with B[illegible]uty's breath." Still, when Sissy began her own slow dying from consumption, during her early 20s, it seems to have unhinged Poe, as though he were losing his young mother all over again. He threw himself into his work and then, after Sissy's death, into the business of finding another wife. There were several takers—Poe was profoundly attractive to women, and the fine photographs in this volume suggest why—but he hesitated until it was too late. At the time of his death at the age of 40 Poe was engaged to, but deeply ambivalent about, one woman, his widowed high-school sweetheart from Richmond, and in love with another. The former did not, as Silverman notes, "fit the pattern of the girl-like women, the ethereal little sisters who most attracted Poe"; the latter, Annie, did, but Annie was married.

The circumstances of Poe's death remain mysterious. He was returning from a trip south, where he had been raising funds for a new journal. He left Richmond on August 27, 1849, exactly a month after taking the pledge of sobriety. For a week he disappeared, only to resurface semiconscious, in borrowed clothes, barely recognizable, in a Baltimore tavern. Four days later, during which time he reportedly talked to "spectral and imaginary objects on the walls," he died in a Baltimore hospital. The cause of death—alcohol poisoning, exposure, encephalitis have all been suggested—remains unknown, though Silverman approvingly quotes Baudelaire's remark that "this death was almost a suicide, a suicide prepared for a long time."

Poe made his early reputation not as a poet, but as a literary hatchet man. His cruel reviews were as notorious in their time as Randall Jarrell's were in the 1950s. He called one poem "an illimitable gilded swill trough," and remarked winningly that "the greater number of those who hold high places in our poetical literature are absolute nincompoops." Poe considered the critic's principal job as "pointing out ... defects," but the flaws he habitually found were present in his own work, as Silverman points out, and some sort of projection seems to have been operative. Poe's obsession with correct punctuation and grammar in other people's work deflected his fears about his own slipshod syntax. He attacked the spineless fawning of other critics, but he was not above praising mediocrities himself if they could further his own career.

Like many slash-and-burn critics, his politics were reactionary. He attacked the literary tastes of "those negrophilic old ladies of the north" and probably would have enjoyed owning slaves had he been able to afford them. He despised democracy, which he considered "a very admirable form of government—for dogs." It is an irony of his death that he was found on election eve in a beer-and-ballot polling spot.

The literary thefts that Poe unearthed in everything he read—"Longfellow and Other Plagiarists" was the title of one of his screeds—may have had deeper roots. He was himself a plagiarist of the first water, lifting whole pages from encyclopedias to fill out his articles. But his obsession with plagiarism seems to have arisen from a feeling that language itself, by dint of being handled and handed down, was fatally contaminated. His creepy sense, as a poet, that no words were entirely his own engendered in turn his slightly crazed but highly influential notion of the entirely motivated poem, where nothing is left to "accident or intuition."

Poe tended to associate the slackness he deplored with the Transcendentalists clustered around Emerson, with their tendency toward abstraction and their "quips, quirks, and curt oracularities." He knew perfectly well that he was not as skillful a poet as Longfellow or Whittier, but he was a more interestingly analytic one. He maintained that the composition of his own most famous work, "The Raven," "proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem." It was an idea that proved astonishingly fruitful, especially in France, from Mallarmé's attempts to eliminate chance from poetic production to Valéry's links between poetry and mathematics.

But they may have lost in translation some of the comedy of Poe's own statements about "The Raven." Much of what he says sounds reasonable enough, to be sure: "I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the Raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber." But his claims about the inevitability of his choice of a refrain begin to strain credibility:

> That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt: and these considerations inevitably led me to the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel, in connec-

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You deserve a factual look at...

Loan Guarantees for Settlement of Soviet Jews

Should the U.S. Play a Role in this Humanitarian Enterprise?

Only a few months ago, the world was able to watch the thrilling spectacle of the airlift of 15,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel. But the rescue of the Ethiopians, heartening and important though it is, is really only a "sideshow" in the ongoing saga of this ingathering. The greatest challenge facing the Jewish state today, almost even more daunting than the implacable hostility surrounding Israel and the ever-present military challenge, is the ingathering of the Soviet Jews.

What are the facts?

■ For years it had been one of the great policy objectives of the United States vis-a-vis the Soviet Union to allow the free emigration of its citizens. Of all the nationalities in the Soviet Union, the Jews are by far the most endangered and the most anxious to leave the country. Finally, the gates have begun to open – a little slowly at first, but then wider and wider. Under U.S. immigration laws, only a small number of these Soviet fugitives are able to come to our country. The vast majority plan on settling in Israel. And that is as it should be. Because the state of Israel has one single purpose: the ingathering of Jews, especially those that are persecuted and who are in need, from all corners of the world. And it doesn't make any difference, of course, whether they are "Europeans" or whether they come from the Arab countries, from Asia or, as now in the case of the Ethiopian Jews, whether they are black Africans.

■ So far, about 300,000 Soviet Jews have arrived in Israel. A total of about 1 million are expected within the next three years. Since the population of Israel is about 5 million, that is equivalent to the United States having to absorb about 45 million new immigrants – more than the population of the states of California and New York combined – and that within a 3-year period! And the United States is a rich country and an immensely large one. Israel is a poor country. Its per capita income is less than $10,000 per year and more than one-half of the country's budget is dedicated to defense. And it's small: the size of the country is one-half that of San Bernardino County in California. The Soviet immigrants come virtually penniless, because they may not take more than $100 out of the country. There are no ready jobs, and there is no ready housing. It is a daunting and almost overwhelming task to absorb these people. It is estimated that it will ultimately cost more than $50 billion.

■ But Israel is determined to overcome this challenge, to build the 260,000 new housing units that will be needed, to build the 12,000 new classrooms, to create the 360,000 new jobs, and to integrate the 1 million Soviet Jews into Israeli life, just as it has done with over 1 million previous immigrants. Israel and world Jewry will carry virtually all of the cost of this absorption and will create the massive additional infrastructure needed to sustain a population increase of over 20% in just two or three short years. In this fiscal year alone, more than $6 billion or 20% of Israel's budget will go toward absorption of immigrants. The American Jewish community will have raised more than $4 billion and has agreed to co-sign a further $900 million guarantee to help with these costs.

■ There is one urgent matter, however, in which the assistance of the United States will be needed. Israel will ask the United States to *guarantee* (not to grant, not even to lend) $10 billion for housing, funds that will be needed, in $2 billion yearly installments, over a 5-year period. This is a financial transaction that is virtually without risk and at virtually no cost to the United States. In contrast to many of the developing countries, Israel has never defaulted on a loan and has never asked for "forgiveness" of any indebtedness. It has a perfect payment record. American guarantees of this $10 billion loan are absolutely required in order to make the orderly absorption of Soviet Jews into Israel possible.

The matter of the loan guarantee has been deferred for 120 days, at the request of the President. In view of the cataclysmic events in the former Soviet Union, the need for this guarantee is now more urgent even than before. As with all other financial assistance to Israel, the funds under this guarantee will be used only within Israel's 1967 borders. No funds will be used to settle Jews in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"). But the United States must focus on the humanitarian nature of this enterprise. It must not be "linked" and must not be conditioned upon any political issues, such as the procedural questions of the peace process, the question of settlements in the administered areas, or any other "concessions". Israel, like the United States, is a country of immigrants and a beacon of liberty and of hope. The United States should approve the $10 billion loan guarantee to Israel – its best friend and staunchest ally in the world – and should assist, virtually without risk and expense to itself, in one of the greatest liberation movements of our times: the exodus of 1 million Soviet Jews and their orderly absorption in Israel.

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tion with *r* as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact it was the very first which presented itself.

It's hard to believe that Poe didn't mean this partly tongue in cheek. Such an impression is confirmed when he adduces lines like

> Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
> By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
> "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
> Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the nightly shore . . . "

and admits that he had deliberately approached "as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible." Many readers since have felt that he crossed the line. At any rate, the only excuse for those lax yokings of near synonyms—"grave and stern," "shorn and shaven"—is for comic effect.

Poe's best-known poems stick like burrs to the mind, as they were meant to. Eliot once remarked that it was impossible for a poet to be certain that he was *not* influenced by Poe. "The Raven," "Ulalume," "The Bells," "Annabel Lee"—such poems have some of the murkily adhesive power of B-movies seen long ago. (Silverman is right to mention the "technicolor alliteration" of "The Raven.") The best case for Poe's poetry has been made by other poets, for example by Richard Wilbur's claim that Poe explored in his poems (as well as in his tales) the flood of images that flash across the mind's surface as we fall asleep.

In both his criticism and his poetry and tales, Poe was refreshingly free from much of the ideological freight that burdened his anxious contemporaries. Though writers from the South have generally shown him more sympathy than Northerners, Poe preferred not to be cast as a "Southern writer." Despite his editorial position on *The Southern Literary Messenger*, he refused to participate in schemes at puffing a distinctively Southern literature. Poe did share the Southern (and mid-Atlantic) hostility to Boston's literary leadership, but he had been born in Boston after all; and what he disliked about New England writers was what he perceived as their provincialism, the major literary sin he denounced

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in the South as well. He also avoided joining his voice to the literary nationalists of New York, and their tendency to like "a stupid book the better, because, sure enough, its stupidity is American."

There are few regional themes in Poe's tales or poems, most of which occur in exotic places not found on any map. The gothic conventions that he chose to explore—the moldering mansions, ancestral ghosts, and unquiet graves—were part of an international style during the nineteenth century, more pervasively psychological than specific to any one culture. "I maintain that terror is not of Germany, but of the soul," Poe proclaimed. But while his compatriots Charles Brockden Brown and Hawthorne domesticated gothic conventions, setting their stories in a recognizable New World landscape haunted by burned witches and murderous Indians, Poe deliberately removed his narratives from identifiable places.

Where but in dreamland stands the House of Usher?

> During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher.... I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house ... upon the vacant eyelike windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium.

The house as Poe conceives it is itself a decaying body, its "eyelike" windows offering access to the secrets of the grave. What better setting could there be for the lurid fantasies of incest and premature burial that Poe summons up in that great story?

And more of the same autumnal gloom pervades Poe's graveyard ballad "Ulalume," in which the speaker wanders unwittingly to the tomb of his beloved:

> The skies they were ashen and sober;
> The leaves they were crisped and sere—
> The leaves they were withering and sere;
> It was night, in the lonesome October
> Of my most immemorial year:
> It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
> In the misty mid region of Weir:—
> It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
> In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here, the absurd place-names, Auber and Weir, seem chosen partly for purposes of evocation (vaguely Germanic) and partly for rhyme. In any case, Poe made his geographical preferences perfectly clear when he wrote that poetry was "inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave."

When Poe does set a tale in a recognizable locale, he does so for symbolic reasons. Thus his detective stories—a genre that he virtually invented—occur in Paris, since everyone knows that Cartesian France is the home of lucid calculators and problem-solvers. But since Paris itself holds no particular allure for Poe, he shuts up his brilliant detective Dupin and his narrator in a "time-eaten and grotesque mansion, long deserted," in the Faubourg St. Germain, where they close all the shutters at dawn and solve, by dim candlelight, the grisly murders of the Rue Morgue.

Poe's literary credo was both cosmopolitan and formalist. He was one of the founders of the notion of art for art's sake, or, as he put it, the "poem written solely for the poem's sake." His vigorous crusade for the cause of beauty against what he called the "heresy of *The Didactic*" (as usual, exemplified best by Bostonians) may seem crude to contemporary readers; but our smugness would be more fitting if our own debates were any subtler. Poe's best legacy, one suspects, may be his fanatical attentiveness to detail. He thought the "leading error of American criticism" was its "excessive generalization"—an apt warning for any age. Some of his finest jewels (though Silverman warns us that some of the stuff is stolen from others) can be found in his voluminous marginalia, as when he comes across a line of Spenser's defining the nature of love: "To speed, to give, to want, to be undone." Why not omit the third comma, Poe suggests, since "we all know the *willing* blindness—the *voluntary* madness of love."

Silverman calls his biography "not an argument but a narrative," and his book avoids empty theorizing and needless digression. To the extent that he does offer, however diffidently, an explanation for Poe's morbidity (what Whitman called Poe's "incorrigible propensity toward nocturnal themes"), this theory is contained in his subtitle, itself a quote from Poe on the emblematic meaning of the Raven: "Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance." Silverman is hardly the first to notice that "nothing stays buried" in Poe's tales, but he convincingly finds this pattern in pretty much everything Poe wrote or did.

Silverman suggests that this insistent theme is the result of Poe's early losses—of father and mother, of several maternal substitutes, of his wife, and so on—and of his incomplete mourning for them, and his consequent "denial of death." "Much of Poe's career ... may be understood as a sort of prolonged mourning, an artistic brooding on and assemblage of the fantasies activated by an ever-living past." This sounds right, and Silverman is more apologetic than he needs to be for venturing this theory. At the same time, he doesn't let himself be hemmed in by his own explanations. When he mulls over Poe's persistent orality—"Scarcely a tale by Poe lacks something pecked, bit, gnawed, or chewed" (remember that college boy's arm)—Silverman allows that it may well have to do with childhood deprivation, but he invites us to entertain a more immediate and concrete explanation: that the Poes were often starving.

On the vexed subject of Poe's romantic life, Silverman's equanimity is particularly welcome. He argues that it wasn't sex with a child that Poe sought in his marriage to Sissy, but rather the sort of pre-sexual utopia sketched in his poem "Annabel Lee": "*She* was a child and *I* was a child / In this kingdom by the sea ..." Silverman finds nothing to contradict Auden's suspicion that Poe's lovelife was "largely confined to crying in laps and playing house." Indeed, there seems little evidence that Poe—in this regard like Dickinson and Whitman—didn't die a virgin. Late in his life he promised one woman "a pure, calm, and *unexacting* affection." The bizarre erotic details of his stories and essays—the nocturnal dentistry on the corpse of Berenice; the notorious claim that the most fitting subject for literature was the death of a beautiful woman—form more a pattern of mourning than of sexual fantasy.

It is hard to gauge Poe's status as a writer today. He has never disappeared from sight, despite repeated critical attempts (including a vigorous one recently by Harold Bloom) to bury him. But he has likewise never shaken the reputation of being part genius, part charlatan. As James Russell Lowell memorably wrote:

> There comes Poe, with his raven, like
> Barnaby Rudge
> Three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths
> sheer fudge.

For this son of actors, some such ratio seems appropriate. Nor is it easy to think of another major American writer who lacks some of the skills of the showman and salesman. Silverman's brisk and enjoyable book invites a fresh look at Poe, if freshness, with such a subject, is possible. For Poe seemed, even when alive, already somehow posthumous, and no American writing seems older, moldier. Silverman's book sweeps away some of the cobwebs, but the creepy corpse, smiling through tears, still stares darkly up at us.

CHRISTOPHER BENFEY teaches at Mount Holyoke College. His book on Stephen Crane will be published next fall by Knopf.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

The wages of sin

LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, I'VE BEEN zealously keeping abreast of the "semiotics" of the Clinton scandal. I'm up on the "postmodern" qualities and ethical quandaries of the media's self-referential role; on the significance for gender relations of the protagonists' self-presentations; on the political implications of the residual Puritanism of the American psyche. But have we forgotten what this is really about? Fascination with sex. It's not the worst sin—which is probably why American voters seem disinclined to make too much of Clinton's own urges, at the same time that they themselves are avid for graphic details of his escapades. And you can be sure that they are: I'm not convinced for a moment by the latest conventional wisdom, which has it that the public is suddenly maturely nonchalant about erotic adventures. After all, we aren't French. Just because Americans are unlikely to vote on the basis of their voyeurism doesn't mean that we've renounced all interest in titillation. So give us the tabloids, Oprah, Geraldo, and even transcripts of the tapes in the "serious" newspapers (I would, I confess, give them careful study), but spare us the prime-time writhing and op-ed heavy breathing. Such an honest approach would be more fun, and even a lot more wholesome. The British Royals have endured such unabashedly low-brow treatment for years. If the Queen Mum can take the family exposés, surely the Clintons can too.

THE RULES OF SLANDER, ACCORDing to *The New York Times* a couple of Sundays ago, were recently violated by Yoshio Sakurauchi, the first and bluntest of the Japanese legislative leaders to denigrate America's work ethic. If you remember, he opined that American workers are "lazy" and that a third of them "cannot even read." He was promptly accused of overstepping the cardinal principle of disparagement: "Never criticize America in any harsher terms than America criticizes itself." In fact it turns out that workers can't expect much respect at home either. To judge by the *Times*'s own brand of America bashing, Sakurauchi was hardly out of bounds. Prominently displayed above the article about his outburst was a large picture of a Detroit auto worker picketing a Toyota dealership. The editorializing in the choice of photo was not exactly subtle. The man was defending his recently injured pride with a placard that proclaimed, "JAPAN SAID YOUR LAZY, NO TO JAPANESE IMPORTS." "Fighting Words" was the *Times*'s condescending headline. The American workingman had hit upon the perfect retort: How dare you say we "cannot even read"—why, we can't even write!

AMERICANS MAY BE LACKADAISIcal about constructing cars, but we've long been renowned for energy in reconstructing ourselves. In the self-help industry, sluggish sales have never been a problem, and the current "codependency" fad seems to be breaking all records. The movement has come up with the ultimate marketing strategy, promising help for, in the words of one of its promoters, any "person who has let someone else's behavior affect him or her and is obsessed with controlling other people's behavior." That just about covers it. You name a "behavior," and there's a "twelve-step" program, based on techniques pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous, ready to rescue you from its addictive, self-destructive sway. However ludicrous, this vast therapeutic enterprise at least sounds admirably industrious. The truth is, it's not. As my late colleague Henry Fairlie observed almost fifteen years ago in *The Seven Deadly Sins Today*, all these egocentric exertions in fact represent the true triumph of laziness: "Most of the recipes of the 'human potential' movement for personal relationships and 'self-actualization' are prescriptions for emotional and spiritual Sloth.... From cradle to grave, life is to be avoided by therapies, even when they are disguised as something else." As well as he knew America, I doubt that Henry could have imagined just how far organized life-avoidance could go—all the way from Emotions Anonymous to Messies Anonymous, and beyond.

THERE'S AN IMPORTANT DIFFERence between laziness and creative idleness, though the latter is an increasingly alien concept these days. Boris Yeltsin's recent two-day truancy inspired lots of hand-wringing in the West. What was he doing away from Moscow? How could he cancel meetings? Where was the world leader's mandatory daily press release? He must be sick, maybe he's drinking again. In fact, this is one well-established Russian tradition (Andropov and Chernenko took mysterious "vacations," Gorbachev periodically disappeared) that our leaders might do well to emulate. The Bush administration clearly disagrees, but to my mind the spectacle of a president who can't sit still for a minute, who is unable to endure a moment of private ca[illegible]—who even plays speed golf—is [illegible]ot reassuring or morale-boosting. The refrain of the new chief of staff, Samuel Skinner, who talks endlessly about work, work, work on Pennsylvania Avenue, six days a week and on holidays too, is enough to make one nostalgic for the days when the man in the White House took naps (and Wednesday afternoons off to go horseback riding with his wife). It's almost enough to make one nostalgic for the days when we had a chief of staff with a taste for relaxing jaunts out of town. Yes, John Sununu had to cover up his indulgences with the claim that he was working on those long limo rides to New York, but remember what was really going on: stamp collecting. I don't know what was more amazing, that he didn't fly or that he had a hobby.

A RECENT LEISURE-TIME VISIT TO our local puppet theater gave me a chance to catch up on the latest socially enlightened reworking of children's literature. Recalling how the poor giant had been turned into a male chauvinist pig in the performance of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, I couldn't help wondering how the troll would fare in the revisionist version of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. The villains' defense fund should be pleased to discover that this bad guy has been fashionably reconceived: it turns out that, for all his harassment of the hungry goats who venture across [illegible]is bridge in search of greener pastures, t[illegible] troll is himself a victim. He's saddled with, of all things, an abusive wife who bullies him, hollering and clanging her pots and pans. Naturally, he takes it out on the goats. Some of us in the audience immediately recognized a classic codependent relationship, but at least one spectator was merely incredulous: "A troll has a *wife*?" he whispered to me.

ANN HULBERT

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Rethinking the Way We Work

BY ALBERT SHANKER, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

How can we increase U.S. productivity so we'll continue to be competitive in the world economy? This question has everybody worried. In the days when productivity was measured in terms of manufacturing and agricultural output, the U.S. was supreme. Even now, our productivity in these sectors continues to grow. The trouble is, so few workers are engaged in manufacturing or agriculture that gains in these areas are insignificant in terms of overall productivity. The big question is whether we will be able to compete in the knowledge and service sectors that are coming to dominate the economies of the developed world.

According to Peter Drucker, we're not the only ones who should be worried. In "The New Productivity Challenge" (*Harvard Business Review,* November–December 1991), Drucker says that countries like Germany and Japan are in no better shape than we are when it comes to the output of their knowledge and service workers.

A few years ago, everybody thought that new technology would lead to enormous increases in productivity in these areas. Computerizing offices, for example, was supposed to mean that fewer people would be able to accomplish far more. This has not happened; staffing levels have continued to rise much faster than productivity. The first country to figure out how to reverse this trend, Drucker says, "will dominate the twenty-first century economically."

Unless service workers make great strides in productivity, their standard of living will continue to fall.

Making this breakthrough—or failing to—will also have important social consequences. Many people have already noted that the overall standard of living in the U.S. is falling, but Drucker thinks this is a problem for all industrialized countries. He sees it in terms of a growing gap in income between well-educated and well-paid knowledge workers—scientists, computer specialists, consultants of various kinds—and relatively unskilled service workers. Both kinds of workers need to increase their productivity, but unless service workers, in particular, make great strides, their standard of living will continue to fall relative to that of knowledge workers. The result: The entire developed world will be facing a period of "increasing social tensions, increasing polarization, increasing radicalization, possibly even class war."

What's the answer? Drucker looks back to an earlier revolution in productivity and to the principles of Frederick Taylor, the father of the production line. But instead of asking, as Taylor did, how is a particular task, like shoveling sand, performed, Drucker asks, "What is the task?" In other words, what's the aim in doing a particular job? Equally important, what *don't* we need to do in order to accomplish the aim?

This sounds easy. In fact, looking at a task with fresh eyes and stripping away the inessentials is extremely difficult. Most people who want to improve something elaborate it. They add two or three or four pieces to the process—and some extra employees to take care of the additions. In some cases, the process becomes an end in itself—as teachers who have to submit detailed lesson plans to principals who are far too busy to read them know from experience.

Drucker's example of successfully rethinking a task is a Sears, Roebuck innovation in processing mail orders instituted early in this century when most people still paid with coins. Instead of opening each envelope and counting and recording the money, clerks were instructed to weigh the envelopes. If the weight tallied, within specified limits, with the total cost of the order, the envelope was passed on to be scheduled for shipping. This was a daring idea because we are accustomed to dealing with money by counting it. But as result of this and a related innovation, Sears' mail-order department enjoyed a remarkable ten-fold increase in productivity within two years.

Or what about the hospitals that have dramatically reduced the time and labor involved in processing admissions? Instead of requiring a long and detailed form for every patient being admitted, these hospitals started asking only for the information they got about emergency patients: name, sex, age, address and how to bill. Why? Because when they really looked at the task, they decided that was all the information they needed.

Figuring out how to make changes like these takes ingenuity and the ability to step back and look at a job as though you've never seen it before. Also, Drucker acknowledges, it's much more difficult with some jobs than others. Most people would agree about the task involved in processing death claims for an insurance company: Pay them as quickly and cheaply as possible—quantity is the main issue there. But what about jobs where productivity can't be assessed so simply? Maybe both quantity and quality are involved—Drucker gives the architectural draftswoman as an example. Or maybe quality is the primary consideration.

As Peter Drucker points out, rethinking the way we work so that workers in knowledge and service jobs can attain the productivity of people in manufacturing or agriculture will not be a short-term or an easy job. But in some areas—education for example—people have already started rethinking their jobs and working to change them. When they succeed, it will be a big step toward achieving the productivity Drucker is talking about.

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